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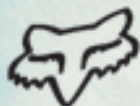
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COVER: Zach Osborne might be a little short in the leg but he's definitely not short when it comes to talent, skills or determination...

© Suttly

CONTENTS: Gregory Aranda's skills are often overlooked due to the on-track exploits of his countrymen Marvin Musquin and the Pourcel brothers but there's no denying that he too is a genuine badass on a dirt bike

© Sarah Gutierrez/KRT Press





ALPINESTARS.COM/TECH10
RYAN VILLOPOTO

COMMENT

It's the nuts working for such a prestigious, market-leading publication as DBR. You only have to look at all the lovely shiny pages to know that our production values reflect the beautiful surroundings the mag's produced in. Plush carpets, semi-tropical plants providing a rich foliage of soothing greenery, the gentle bubble of an aquarium only occasionally muffled by the sound of Anthony helping himself to a chilled glass of Evian from the water-cooler. Through my window I gaze down upon the main thoroughfare of Morecambe where bohemian cafes nestle between art galleries and olde worlde pubs while the sun dances across tiled rooftops as the good folk of this quaint fishing village go about their business.

And if you believe that crock o' shoite you'll believe anything! The truth? We're shoe-horned into a tiny corner of a semi-derelict eyesore, the only plant life is growing in the bottom of Suttly's coffee mug #2 that's stained the colour of a tramp's skidders, the heating's bust, the threadbare nylon carpet can deliver a heart-stopping charge of static electricity and the drinks dispenser has been out of order since the summer when it was infested by ants. Still, it could be worse. I could be outside where, if I peer over the office window ledge that doubles as the last resting place of a decaying pigeon, my eyes are drawn to the side door of Morecambe's premier fighting boozier where groups of hoodies struggle to keep their Lamberts alight in the horizontal rain.

So for the time being I'm staying indoors which, after all, is where I've spent most of the last month seeing as the show season has been in full swing and the British SX series has just kicked off. First port of call was Stoneleigh Park for the annual Dirt Bike Show. The lack of an official presence from all the main manufacturers bar KTM did – for me at least – take a little of the glitz and glamour off the event but this didn't detract from the number of people who passed through the doors and as always the team behind the show did a polished and professional job.

The DBS is a great place to catch up with people and I spent a couple of busy days meeting and greeting before I got mugged at the Fro Systems stand by the lovely Mark 'Terry' McCann with the biggest bottle of Jack Daniels I've ever seen in my life. The following morning, semi-conscious in the passenger seat of the DBR works Astra as Suttly lead-footed it along the M6 Toll, I felt like I'd been clubbed by the over-sized empty but my poundin' noggin was nothing compared to the world of hurt Blarney writer Stevie Mills was inhabiting after he was dropped on his head while being 'helped' from a taxi back at the hotel. Sorry Stevie!

Next up was the NEC Bike Show where off-road sport was enjoying its biggest presence ever with a whole hall devoted to all things dirty. DBR together with our sister publication T+MX have been enthusiastic supporters of this from the get-go. The DBS is the best way to reach out to the off-road faithful but the NEC Show offers a not-to-be-missed chance to spread the word among mainstream bikers. It's a huge 120,000-plus audience and the potential to win new converts to off-road riding is something that has to be explored and – if realised – will benefit everyone. I was in Brum for the start of the show and after a couple of initially quiet days things definitely started to pick up in the off-road hall, helped along the way by a few on-the-fly tweaks by the organisers. There are certainly lessons to be learned from this initial effort but the people behind the show are committed to making an off-road presence work. It was never likely to be an overnight success but this year has provided a solid foundation to build on.

One of the big hooks of the off-road hall was regular supercross demonstrations sandwiched between the first two rounds of the Future West SX series. I checked out the opening round and to be honest was left scratching my head a little bit. There was some great racing – it's always good to see Mike Brown on the gas and the Crock Star's block passing moves in particular were stand-out moments – but the whole thing seemed to lack atmosphere. It was too light in the stands, Jack Burnicle's commentary was virtually inaudible and – funny as this may sound for a sport as hectic as SX – there was too much going on. I've got lots of respect for John Hellam for having the balls to promote supercross in this country but I can't help thinking since those heady early days of Jeremy McGrath at Sheffield the sport's lost its way in the UK...

Sean



NEWSHAWND!

DEPUTY DAWG'S DIRTY DELIVERY OF OFF-ROAD NEWS...

Although it was absent from the Stoneleigh Dirt Bike Show the all-new KTM 350SX-F recently made its British debut at the NEC and was warmly welcomed by both the media and public.

Expected to be ridden by reigning champion Antonio Cairoli in the 2010 MX1 world series the mid-size bike looks like it could potentially change our sport as it promises to pack 450-style power in a 250F chassis – mmmmm, the best of both worlds. Obviously it's not quite as black and white as that but with a rider onboard who is as skilled in the modern way of MX as Cairoli is then it's definitely gonna make the new GP year a little more interesting.

Also injecting a little excitement to the early GPs in an orange stylee will be the return to world championship competition of Californian bad boy Mike Alessi who like Cairoli will be running a 350 SX-F against the factory fo-fiddys. But unlike Tony, Alessi's goal isn't to win the world championship as come May he'll be headed back Stateside in a bid to win his first AMA national crown.

Another rider with his sights set on domestic glory this year is Jason Dougan who after threatening to retire from motocross after struggling to find a suitable ride for the 2010 season has been thrown a lifeline by the man who originally gave the Portsmouth youngster a shot at the big time. Steve Dixon's UTAG squad have reportedly picked up the 22-year-old on a national championship-only deal where Doogs will have a good crack at winning the Red Bull Pro Nationals and MX1 British championship.

Speaking of the Maxxis British motocross championship it appears the official national championship has been shaken up for 2010 with new venues and a rumoured return to a three-moto format. It's hoped the shorter races will offer more intense racing and offer spectators better value for money.

The series kicks off on **February 28** – that's one week before the pre-season international at Hawkstone Park – at Little Silver in Devon before moving to Mallory Park for round two on March 21. The series then visits Duns (May 2), Lyng (June 13), Foxhill (July 25), Farleigh Castle (August 15) and Landrake or Silverstone (August 29) before finishing off at Hawkstone Park (October 3). Although old-school fans are probably salivating at the prospect of top-level motocross returning to Farleigh Castle there's a real kick in the nuts for the series and that's the loss of Canada Heights as season opener.

Of course, one series' loss is another series' gain and the good news for fans of the Red Bull Pro Nationals is that Canada Heights hosts not one but two rounds for 2010. Like the Maxxis the Pro Nats will run a new format as each weekend will also feature rounds of the Elite Youth Cup and Fuchs Silkolene two-stroke series. It's looking likely that the EYC and Open two-strokes will race on the Saturday while super Sundays will have the 125cc smokers, two motos for the youth racers and all the usual Pro National goodness including the Proppa.com Van Slam. And there's more because as well as all the racing the Pro Nats weekends will have live bands, FMX displays, novice rider



Instead of hanging up his boots Doogs will be hanging it out on a Yam



Bryan MacKenzie's most likely heading to Husky

Make a date for The Tough One



experiences, an MX village and even a kids' zone!

The series starts at Foxhill (March 13/14) before moving on to Landrake (April 3/4), Canada Heights (May 15/16), Whitby (June 26/27), an unconfirmed venue on July 10/11 then Pontrilas (August 7/8), Canada Heights again (August 21/22) before the whole shooting match finishes up at Wakes Colne (September 18/19). All in all it should be an exciting year for British motocross.

Another exciting development for the UK scene is the potential return of Husqvarna at the top level. Since pretty much disappearing from view in 2002 the Swedish/Italian/German machines have been thin on the ground in MX competition but if the rumours we're hearing are true then that might all be about to change. After starting out as a Kawasaki-equipped team before changing to Honda equipment for '09, Jeff Perrett's Twisted-7 squad looks likely to be named as the official Husqvarna UK motocross team for 2010.

Concentrating on the MX2 class the main team will consist of Bryan MacKenzie and super-Swede Rickard Sandberg who'll both be looking for top results in Britain's two main domestic championships – the Maxxis and the Red Bull Pro Nationals. It should be an interesting year for the squad who'll be armed with super-fast TC250s.

Over in the States all focus is on the upcoming AMA supercross series that kicks off at Anaheim's Angel Stadium on **January 9**. If last year's war is anything to go by the 2010 championship should be amazing with James Stewart, Chad Reed, Kevin Windham, Josh Grant and Ryan Villopoto all ready to do battle. Another rider reported to be getting

ready for the supercross season is jailbird Jason Lawrence who has recently signed to No Fear.

Apparently the top dogs at the Californian-based clothing company are confident that Jason has changed for the better and on his return to the track he'll be focussed on racing and becoming a positive role model for aspiring athletes.

On the subject of aspiring athletes, Brits abroad Tommy Searle and Max Anstie are both set to make their supercross debuts although it's not known yet if they'll be racing in the East or West Coast Lites battles. It'll also be worth keeping an eye on ex-pats Steven Clarke and Adam Chatfield who are also set for supercross success.

Meanwhile, the British SX championship is set to continue with round three in Liverpool on **January 23** and the fourth and final race of the series in London's O2 Arena on **January 30**. For up to date lists of who's riding log on to www.fwsx.com where you'll also find results from the second round that was held at the NEC just after our print deadline. Tickets for Liverpool can be found online at <http://tiny.cc/DhEJR> or by calling **0844 800 4000** while the number for O2 tickets is **0871 984 0002** or you can find them online at <http://tiny.cc/9DL0c...>

Tickets are also on sale now for The Tough One that returns to Nantmawr Quarry also on **January 23**. As part of the all-new World Xtreme Enduro series the T1 promises to be an awesome day of off-road racing that kicks off at 9am with a 90-minute qualifier for the afternoon's Main Event. There will also be a non-qualifiers race, a hot lap competition for the 10 top finishers in the qualifier and the Boulder Dash so there's plenty of gritty

action to sink your teeth into.

At £100 – until **December 31** when the price will increase – tickets don't seem too cheap but please remember that each entry ticket covers all the occupants of each particular vehicle so buy a ticket then split the costs with your mates. Most cars seat five people so it could work out at 20 quid a head or even less if you have a people carrier crammed full of midgets. Check out www.worevents.com for more details...

You might have noticed that we spend a fair bit of time over at FatCat Motoparc testing bikes, testing kit and testing products – and testing owner Martin Craven's patience too. As much as we love the place as it is now we won't be headed there much longer as a leisure complex is being built on the original site.

But believe it or not that's great news because now Martin and track builder Russ Mason – who's a little camera shy, oh yes he is – have got the opportunity to move their motorsports facility a few fields across where underneath the acres of grass that reside there now is a bank of pure sand on which the new tracks – motocross, supercross, endurocross, vets and more – will all be built.

The long-term plans for this facility are immense and we'll keep you updated on the progress over the next few months to give you a good idea of what goes into building an off-road racetrack from start to finish. Go to www.fatcatmotoparc.com for more updates on this build and keep logging on to www.dirtbikerider.com for the best in up-to-the-minute off-road bikesport news and views.



Reigning SX King James Stewart

"I remember when this was all fields!" Martin Craven's got big plans...





WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

RC MX BIKE WORTH £249.99 MUST BE WON!

Do you dream about having your very own track in your very own back garden and being able to race your very own MX bike around it? Sadly, we're not all Jake Nicholls and Jim'll Fix It hasn't been on air since the '80s so the chances are – lottery win aside – that it'll remain exactly that. A dream.

But hold your horses homies! What about if the bike in question was an awesome one-fifth scale Anderson M5 RC motocross bike? Suddenly – as the hot chick with the eye-patch once sang – dreams can come true. Think about it. No longer do you need a couple of acres at the back of the homestead and a digger – an average-sized garden and a spade will do the job.

And while you're at it, how about a bit of supercross as well? Some books and your well-thumbed back issues of DBR will make great ramps and you can prop open a couple of doors for that Paris Bercy corridor effect! Hell, you can even go crazy with the dimmer switch while little sis puts on an opening ceremony with her Barbie dolls.

All you need now is the bike – and that's where we can help. We've got together with Schumacher Racing to offer one lucky reader an Anderson M5 RC MX bike of their very own.

Weighing in at a penny under 250 squiddy-dids, the M5 is an awesome machine and like all top-notch motocross machinery there's a list of after-market bits available for it as long as your arm including carbon-fibre frames and wheels, aluminium swingarms and oil-filled front forks.

To be in with a chance of winning simply let us know which off-road legend is nicknamed the GOAT?

Is it:
A: Roger De Coster
B: Ricky Carmichael
C: Ryan Hughes
D: Geoff Walker

Once you've decided on your answer hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com where you need to follow the competition link, type in your answer, fill out the fields and hit transmit. The comp closes at noon on **January 14** with the first correct entry chosen totally at random getting the M5.

If you fancy an Anderson M5 but don't fancy your chances of winning then hook up to www.racing-cars.com where you can also check out some great video of the RC machine in action.

WHERE'S CYRIL?

FIND DESPRES AND WIN A SHARK SKIDDER

This month we've got yet another top-of-the-range **Shark SXR Cyril Despres** replica skid lid worth a whole **£229.99** to give away thanks to the ladies and gentlemen at Nevis Marketing.

By now you should know the script like the back of your hand – we've chopped the fast Frenchie's head off and superimposed his disembodied noggin on someone else's shoulders elsewhere in the pages of this 'ere issue of DBR. If you can spot it then you could win the helmet – simple, eh?

All you have to do is locate Cyril's napper and then text the word **DBRCYRIL** followed by a space, the page number, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Entries close on **January 14** with the first correct entry chosen at random getting the Shark skidder in a size of their choice...



GOLDENPAD

WIN A PAIR OF RENTHAL HANDLEBARS

There are many different sorts of bars – poncey wine bars, more traditional beer-drinking bars, exotic cocktail bars, underground baggiping bars, why there's even such a thing as a fubar! Like 'em or loathe 'em (and some are good while some are very bad), bars are part of everyday life. And if you race dirt bikes then there's also Renthal bars! And here's a chance to win a pair of your very own!

Have a close look at our pic of this golden Renthal bar pad, then flick through this month's mag and find the full pic we've taken it from. Once you've found it simply text the word **DBRRENT** followed by a space, the page number it appears on, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Entries close on **January 14** with the first correct entry chosen at random getting a pair of Renthal handlebars of their choice...

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THE REVEREND

ADRENALIN JUNKIE!

DOWNHILLING, EXTREME TRAIL RIDING, BUNGEE-JUMPING, WHITEWATER RAFTING, SKYDIVING – IF YOU WANT A RELAXING HOLIDAY THEN DON'T BOOK WITH JAKE TOURS...

Words by **Jake Nicholls** Photo by **Sutty**

Hi everyone – hope all's well and that you're not too stressed out over the typical English weather we're enjoying at the moment. I'm sat here typing this out hoping the torrential rain will stop so I can go for a run but once I've finished I'm outta here whatever the weather to start my second week of training. Back to that later, first I need to update you on my trip...

Last time I checked in we'd just bought the car and stayed at my granddad's for a few nights which was nice as I don't get to see him too much. We took a trip to Taupo where Ben Townley's from and did a skydive and whitewater rafting which were both amazing. From there we decided to head south and a day of driving later we found ourselves in what I believe to be the capital city of Wellington.

We only stayed there a couple of nights as there wasn't too much to see other than a cool museum with just about everything in it. From there we got the four-hour ferry across to the South Island and drove straight to Nelson which is where my old wrench Mr Lithgow is from – unfortunately he was still in England so he couldn't show me about. It's also the next town along to where Josh Coppins is from but he was also still in Europe.

The weather was strangely about 10 degrees warmer there than in Wellington so being true Brits we all had our shirts off by the pool in our newly-found flash hostel and, yes, I did burn! So we enjoyed a couple of days there then hit the road for a long old drive to Fox's Glacier (yes, it is where the sweets are made) where we stayed one night and did an amazing walk up a mountain and onto the big chunk of ice known as a glacier – pretty unreal really.

Then we took another long drive to a quiet town called Wanaka which was okay but seriously expensive. I got up early in search of a fry up and wandered about for ages looking at ridiculous prices for an average breakfast and ended up having to pay like 12 squid for a wanky breakfast with no black pudding or hash browns – WTF!

So we set sail again – this time to Queenstown where my old mate Scott Columb hails from. I called him before we left and he directed me straight to his track where he was practising. We got there while he was doing motos and straight away I got a itch for riding and I'd only been off the bike three weeks. So we watched him for a while then he took us to their workshop and next thing we were on a trail ride up the mountains searching for snow – it was so much fun and the boys loved it too. It was good having a bit of a tear up with SC up the hills. One of my boys – Wardy – had a big stack too which added to the entertainment!

We took a look around the town the next day and checked some activities out to fill our week up. Scott took us downhill at the local hill which was unreal – it was my first time and I got the bug in a big way. I've never had so much fun on a push bike. Then we

treated ourselves to the world's biggest burger at a place called Furgburger which was amazing. Next day it was time to do bungee – 50 metres off a ledge 400 metres above the town so you can imagine the beautiful views up there but they were the least of my concerns. I was the first to throw myself off and then the boys went. I loved it so much I did it again but this time backwards which was mental.

We went downhill again that night – I was totally in my element doing all this stuff and thought can it get any better? The next day was Halloween and as it was SC's birthday we celebrated. After an awesome BBQ at his parents' house we hit the town and had a real fun night. Next day he took us on a 4x4 tour which was cool and that night we went for a pizza then said goodbye to Scott as he was heading back north to test.

We then went to Milford Sounds which was beautiful – all sightseeing stuff – then came back to Queenstown and did a jet boat ride which was unreal. As it was our last day in the adventure capital I thought we'd better do the biggest bungee they've got and the third biggest in the world at 134 metres. I was the only one booked to do it but the boys came and watched me do mine and being true members of the #45 herd they threw themselves off there too. From there we moved around the mountain a bit and did the Nevis Arc which is the highest swing which again was rude. Then we pinned it to Christchurch for a couple of days and toured the east coast quickly before getting the roughest boat journey of my life back to the north island, spent the last few days with my granddad which was cool then it was tally ho to New Zealand and back to Blighty with some awesome memories and three awesome mates.

The jet slag didn't hit me to much at all. Got home Sunday night, caught up with everyone Monday and went shopping for new running trainers etc. Then Tuesday thanks to Geoff Walker and DBR I got the chance to go downhill with Josh and two great lads – Brendan Fairclough and Rich Thomas – who are both well known pro downhillers. I got paired with Rich and we did timed runs etc – I really enjoyed myself and I think did Josh as well. We surprised each other with one of the jumps we hit as neither of us are that confident on the pushies. I'm sure if you flick through you'll see the results of a great day so thanks Geoff.

Since then I've been hitting the training hard and lost the skin off my knuckles where it's gone soft from a lack of boxing but I'm loving every minute of it. Josh is coming down to train today so that should be cool.

As you can see I owe a big thank you to SC and his family for looking after us. And thanks for reading – sorry there's a lack of MX involved but I switch off from the motorsickle this time of year and there's plenty of months coming up to write about racing!



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT NO FEAR MX DIVISION AT +33 442.163.604
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Do not attempt the riding scenes shown, wear protective clothing and observe the traffic regulations.

KTM

TIMOTEI POTISEK

1983-2009

A tragic training accident claimed the life of Le Touquet legend Timotei 'Tim' Potisek last month.

Practising on his new Yamaha France YZF450, Potisek crashed on the Loon Plage sand track at Dunkirk, broke his neck and died four days later. He was 25 years old.

Timotei and his racing brothers Matei and Sergei could hardly escape the clutches of our exciting sport. Their father Rudy was a motocross ace who finished fourth in his home French 125 GP at Cassel, near Calais, in 1976 (behind current Honda Europe off-road co-ordinator Roger Harvey). When he retired, Rudy built up 'Potisek Moto', a flourishing Honda dealership in his native Saint Pol near Dunkirk.

Born on Boxing Day 1983, Tim – inspired by his idol Jeremy McGrath – began racing at the age of 12. Academically accomplished, he was to gain a degree in science while becoming 13 times MX champion of Flanders and, in 2004, French National MX champion. But it was at Le Touquet's famous beach that his reputation blossomed. Sixth in 2002, aged just 18, he was second in '04 and '05 before claiming his first victory in 2006.

His subsequent failures were even more glorious. Potisek led handsomely in 2007 until a brush with a backmarker broke his Honda's oil cooler. And a year later, in the most enthralling Le Touquet ever, he hunted down Arnaud Demeester's Yamaha in a simply pulverising late pursuit. Tim nailed the six-time winner on the final lap and was only denied victory out of sight of our TV cameras when the burly Demeester T-boned him beneath a footbridge 200 metres from the chequered flag.

But Potisek dominated the 'Championnat de France des Sables' (French Beach Racing Championship) that year to beat Demeester and back at Le Touquet 2009 wreaked sweet revenge with his second win. Demeester's retirement urged Yamaha France to hire Timotei who had spent his whole career with Honda, spoke excellent English and always represented Potisek Moto at official Honda functions.

Tim paid his only racing visit to the UK for the 2007 Weston Beach Race. There this tall, dark-haired, engaging guy finished a fine fourth behind reigning MX1 world champion Steve Ramon riding the most earth-shaking, booming CRF450 we'd ever heard.

Potisek also scored good points when he dabbled in MX1 GPs (like Lommel this year, in his beloved sand) and Dave Thorpe said after seeing him in action at Loon Plage "you'd think you were watching a 10-time world champion". That, coming from an actual triple 500 GP world champ, is praise indeed and Tim's spectacular speed, class and courage will be sorely missed.

10,000 people turned out for Timotei Potisek's funeral at the church of St Eloi in Dunkirk to pay their last respects to this popular sportsman. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his wife and family for their unimaginable loss.

Jack Burnicle

CROCKSTAR

MULTI-TASKING!

WITH THE SHEFFIELD ROUND OF THE INDOOR ENDURO WORLD CUP AND THE BIRMINGHAM NEC SX TO TAKE ON – PLUS A FACT-FINDING MISSION TO SPAIN – IT'S BEEN ALL GO FOR OUR FAVOURITE CARROT-TOPPED IRISHMAN...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttty

I've been flat-out since I last wrote my column. I had to find a steed to do the endurocross at Sheffield on at the very last minute as the bike I had arranged became useless for what I needed it for (long story). So on the Wednesday leading up to the event I had no bike but by 8:30am the following day I had met a friend who lent me his KTM 300cc two-stroke and was on my way to my workshop to get it prepared for the endurocross.

I was leaving later that day to catch the ferry across to Scotland and raced against the clock all day to get the bike turned around. I borrowed the KTM from Colin Donaldson and he hadn't touched it from the XC he did on it the previous Saturday. Not even washed when I got it. Anyhow, it all came good and I made the ferry with the bike in good shape. My only concern was that I didn't get a chance to set it up.

I travelled over with Phillip McLaughlin and we went to FatCat Motoparc in Doncaster on the Friday. They have a cool extreme endurocross track there and we spent the afternoon trying out the course and altering some bits and pieces on our bikes. The Indoor Enduro World Cup at Sheffield was my first ever attempt at extreme racing. The format is similar to SX – 14 riders line up and race from gate to flag. Distance varies from five to 10 laps and the lap times for the pros are around one minute. The course is made up of all man-made obstacles using logs, rocks, huge earth mover tyres, a waterpool, sand, sleepers, dirt berms and dirt jumps.

It is really crazily physically intense – way more than SX or MX – and exhausts you in a very short space of time. I was really disappointed at how little of a crowd showed up – I expected it to be a sell-out. I can only assume that fans didn't understand the concept of it and the word enduro made them think it was going to be a long endurance race. Hopefully it will be back in the UK again and people will know more of what it is all about and come to see it.

I had a great result with 11th overall and sixth being my best finish in the last of the three finals. That was round one of the world championship and I'm sorry I will miss the next one as I'm already committed to competing at

the NEC SX which is on the same weekend as the IEWC event in Genoa.

After Sheffield I had to get the borrowed KTM returned to Colin and start thinking what I was going to do next involving bikes. The Stoneleigh Dirt Bike Show was the following weekend and I had some people I wanted to approach with a view to getting support from them for my future on two wheels. I didn't get any final answers by the time I had left on Sunday night but during the next week I received some positive phone calls.

The most promising came from Kawasaki. I am discussing with them the idea of me racing for them in various events, starting with the British SX series for the Kawasaki Racing Team. This is run, managed and owned by the Paul Bird Motorsport group. We are working on completing a package where I will race the World Enduro Championship for them. David Knight has been their rider for the second half of 2009 after he previously had been riding for BMW. Knighter won at the last round of the WEC on the Kawasaki so he has proved the KX450F can win and is competitive. David has signed to race for KTM for next season in the WEC.

I still love motocross and will always race it where I can. The reality is that I haven't got one single offer for bikes to race motocross in 2010. I'm not talking about wages or bonuses or paid expenses, I mean I haven't been offered a bike to race by anybody in motocross. So naturally I will look at other options.

I'm flying down to Murcia in Spain tomorrow to research and investigate setting up a riding camp for people to come to during the wet winter period in the UK. I will look at providing facilities for riders and teams to come and practice and test in the pre-season. Coaching and training will be on offer from me throughout the winter and pre-season. I want to create a solution to the difficulty our British winter brings to us off-roaders. I have had to try and work with it my entire career and I know how much of a disadvantage it brings. I'll announce more when I'm up and running with details.

Ciao for now...





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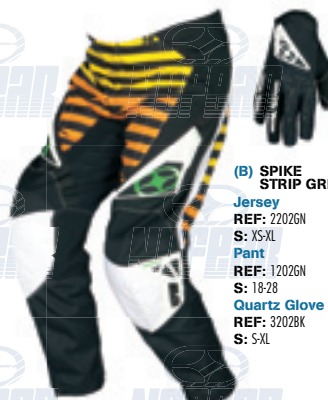
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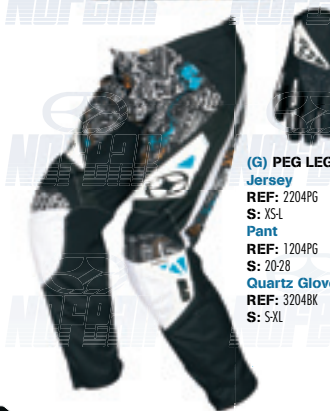
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SWORDY

OFF-SEASON!

SWORDY'S WAITING TO START RIDING AGAIN SO IN BETWEEN TRAINING SESSIONS HE'S HANDING OUT TROPHIES, LAYING TURF, HAVING HIS PICTURE TAKEN AND – MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL – TRYING TO KEEP JODIE HAPPY...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Suttty

The months are ticking by and it's that time of the year which is taken up with the Dirt Bike Show, presentations and spending loads of money up to Christmas. I don't mind the first two but being Scottish I like to spend as little as possible and that's going to be hard this year as it's Ayrton's first Christmas and I can't wait to spoil him! Jodie and I are so excited we're going all-out on the Christmas décor so I'm expecting a big electric bill in the New Year (nothing new there then).

So far I have done two presentations which are so good to do as you get to meet all the kids that are riding and parents that give so much of their time and money to their children. They all have so much passion for the sport and are always so supportive to me as a professional rider. The South Somerset club was a great evening as Ty Kellett came and I had a nice chat with him. He's a really cool kid and is doing so well with his rehab and improving by the day. I wish him all the best – stay strong mate.

I have a few more presentations to do over the next few weeks and one's on Jodie's birthday – she'll kill me for writing this but it's her 30th! The condition was I need to make it special for her the weekend after so I'm taking her to the theatre followed by a nice hotel and a night with no baby. And then there's the massages on her birthday and breakfast in bed – and she's told me exactly what she wants to eat. Women! God she had better be happy!

I went to Stoneleigh for two days for the Dirt Bike Show. I look forward to it as you get to catch up with everyone. I went on the Thursday and took Ayrton with me – he loves the bikes and will just sit and stare at one for ages. It was good to see Ryan my mechanic for next year and see some of the team from CCM. I am really looking forward to getting on the bike now and getting testing for next year. At the moment I am just really busy training, getting my fitness ready for next year. We do really hard cycles, swimming and gym but already I can feel my fitness is getting stronger ready for the MX1 bike. I would have always said I was an MX2 rider but now the change has forced me to move

up a class it was definitely a blessing in disguise for me. I am better suited to the MX1 bike now, feel much stronger and my confidence is great.

While I am waiting to jump back on the bike I've had the chance to do stuff around the house. After a year of living here we've not had any blinds so the first thing I have got sorted was that (did you put them up yourself? – SL). What a difference that makes – no more living in a fish bowl! I'm also getting my dad down this week to help me do the back garden. When you move into a new home they put down about four slabs and leave the rest as grass - great for the dogs but we can't walk out there as it's so muddy so there's some hard labour for me over the next few days. I enjoy doing it but not when it's pouring with rain as it always seems to be! I did the front of our house last week thinking it would only take me a few hours – two days later it was finished! It's all turfed now and doing it myself saved me loads of money. It is nice to have time to do things around the house and it gets Jodie off my back – she's been asking for these jobs to be done all year.

We went to get Ayrton some professional pictures done and he was so good, the only problem we had was that every time a camera is pointed at him he smiles (he gets that from his mother!). It's great except when we wanted a serious one it was nearly impossible. They took loads as Jodie was telling them what to do which was funny as she was so precise about what she wanted. We picked up our pictures and they are amazing. I had one done with him sat with my boots and helmet that had Swordy written on it. It is such a great picture – I'm putting that in my games room upstairs. When we picked them up they asked to use loads of his pictures for their adverts and the MX one was one of them which made us very proud parents.

Well that is it for yet another month – let's hope the weather improves so we can all get riding as it's impossible when it's like this. Oh and Jodie's sister has just had a baby boy so congratulations Cindy and James – let the sleepless nights begin!

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RYAN HUGHES

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Interview and photos by **JP O'Connell**

Q: When you were at the height of your career did you employ a trainer/nutritionalist?

Nev Hopkins, Wool

A: "No I didn't, mostly because there weren't people around who knew too much about the sport back then. Towards the end of my career I met a guy called Paul Chek who started teaching me about the body, nutrition and training and that's what I've gone on to teach."

Q: I remember the battles you had with Langston and Brown back in '03 – if I recall rightly the last round was cancelled due to the weather, denying you a chance to take the title. How much of a bummer was that?

Liam Stroud, Dartford

A: "It was a bummer that it was ripped away like that but I have no regrets as I know that I put everything I had into that championship. Experiences like that have made me the person and coach that I am today."

Q: Having had the pleasure of watching you race and meeting you at Landrake at the final round of the British championships, will we be seeing you racing in the UK again next year?

Dennis White, Aberdeen

A: "Possibly, if the opportunity comes along for some schooling and racing. The first objective for me is to get the schooling side of things set up so people can learn my philosophy toward the sport."

Q: From what I've read about you it seems that you are working harder than ever – do you get a day off?

Stu Radford, Torquay

A: "[Laughing] Yeah, I try to plan a day off a week. I keep them completely to myself – no cell phone, no TV and my wife and kids know not to bother me too much. I like to spend the time listening to music, meditating,

doing some art and spending time in my garden. If you have no time to yourself you don't get to know yourself"

Q: Where does the nickname Ryno come from – is it due to a leathery skin condition?

Rob Nash, Hove

A: "It's an abnormally large limb that I have...no, seriously, when I was young I would always get bad starts and have to charge through the pack, a friend called Jim Castillo [inventor of Asterisk knee braces] started to call me Ryno."

Q: Which rider now most reminds you of yourself?

Niall Taylor, Woking

A: "There is no-one quite like me out there – personality wise there is no-one! I guess if I had to pick someone it would be Justin Barcia although I like to think I was slightly more in control, still on the edge but in control. He tends to do things that waste energy that I wouldn't have done."

Q: You are in the position of having ridden the majority of your career on two-strokes before making the transition to four-strokes. Which do you prefer racing and which would you choose to go out and play on?

Tim Wilson, Chickerell

A: "I would pick a four-stroke 450 every time just because of the power, how tractable it is and how it delivers the power. It's a difficult bike to ride fast and I like that. I have a two-stroke that I rode once at an endurocross and was given free so I'm gonna mothball it for 20 years until it's worth something!"

Q: How many different factories have you ridden for?

Adam Morgan, Edinburgh

A: "Kawasaki, Honda, Suzuki and KTM."

Q: Have you ever had a full-on punch-up on the track and if the answer's yes then who with?

Steve Meredith, Manchester

A: "Yeah, two punch-ups plus a few scuffles. Doug Henry T-boned me and we went down, we started punching each other before wrestling right in the middle of the track. The second incident was a week after I returned from a broken leg, Mike Brown T-boned me on the practice track – he just stood there while I was punching him! I don't go looking for trouble and a bit of bar banging is fine but when it gets dangerous then I have to take control. That's what passion does and when I pull on my helmet don't f**k with me!"

Q: With a career as long as yours how many bones have you broken?

Sam Thomas, Lowestoft

A: "A lot! I've broken 20 bones, had 20 surgeries, 12 concussions, I have no ACL in one leg, my jaw is plated and screwed, I have a screw in both wrists and a plate and six screws in my humerus."

Q: You have raced most of the modern day greats – who did you have the biggest rivalry with?

Damian Marshall, Somerton

A: "I've had a few – Mike Brown, Jeremy McGrath, Damon Huffman – but I'd say Brownie was who I had the fiercest rivalry with. That's reminded me, I also had a punch-up with Jeff Emig after he T-boned me and I went over a five foot chain link fence! We're good friends now though and probably going to be business partners."

Q: Is it true that you can change a tyre with your bare hands?

Chris Bryant, Hungerford

A: "[Laughing] No, not with my bare hands – I use my rhino penis as a tyre iron and my teeth as fingers!"

Q: How did you get the scar on your face?

Ian Harris, Ringwood

A: "It was in '93 at the Kawasaki SX test track. I wheeled into the whoops, got it a bit wrong and went over the bars face first into the next whoop. I broke my helmet, got a three inch scar and picked up one of my concussions."

Q: Which of your trophies takes pride of place in the Hughes' residence?

Wayne Best, Kidderminster

A: "There are three. The first is from a SX race that I won in '94 the week after my dad died, the second is my winner's trophy from the MXdN in 2000 and the third is from my 1-1 at Hangtown in '03 after returning from a year's retirement."

Q: Do you ever feel the need to sit down, stick your feet up, crack open a cold one and watch the original Crusty Demons?

Brian Newell, Canterbury

A: "I don't get to watch those kind of videos anymore and certainly not with a cold one! I'm the opposite of that guy now and I'd prefer to sit down with a chilled glass of white wine and a good book – but, of course, when the helmet goes on look out!"

Q: If you and Mike Brown had an arm wrestle who would win?

Ben Eastment, Bath

A: "I think the rest of the interview should answer that question nicely!"

Q: How important to you was winning the des Nations with Ricky and Travis back in 2000

Rob Humphrey, Dublin

A: "It was really important to me as it was a motocross goal that I had set myself. I had been sidelined with a broken wrist for most of that season and the MXdN was pretty much my first race back. It was good to get out there on the track and shut up some of the naysayers and get to stand up on the podium in front of 50,000 people."

NEXT MONTH

BILLY MACKENZIE >>

Next month we have the Oz-based Brit waiting in the wings to answer your questions so fire 'em off to dbiprobe@googlemail.com

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ITALIAN JOB!

THIS MONTH'S TESTOSTERONE TEST COMES COURTESY OF DE CARLI YAMAHA'S CURRENT MX1 CHAMP TONY CAIROLI AND FORMER WORLD JUNIOR CHAMP ALESSANDRO 'THE WOLF' LUPINO...

Interview by JP O'Connell

DBR: Who would play you in a film of your life?

AL: "I like the actor Brad Pitt – he is fun!"

TC: "Ah, that's a nice question! I think Vin Diesel, I like his kind of movies."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

AL: "Only last week!"

TC: "In 2005 when I was training at my home in Sicily."

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

AL: "When I was younger I used to work on my 85cc but now I like to leave it to my mechanic."

TC: "No, not on the 450!"

DBR: Have you ever eaten anything that you've killed?

AL: "When I go home I like to go hunting with my dad, nothing serious though."

TC: "Only fish, I have been hunting a few times with my father but I not like so much!"

DBR: How many bones have you broken?

AL: "So many! The worst was in 2006 when I broke my shoulder and my leg."

TC: "I think four."

DBR: Can you eat spaghetti without a spoon?

AL: "I like spaghetti carbonara and, yes, I can eat it without a spoon!"

TC: "Oh yes!"

DBR: Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

AL: "I eat properly, although I like marmalade on toast."

TC: "I like to eat chocolate."

DBR: You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out on the last corner for the win?

AL: "Yeah I would do that! I have done it two times – one time I hit Mattias Karro and we both went down, he damaged his wheel and I got up for the win!"

TC: "If he leaves the door open then for sure I try but if he is on the right line then no I wouldn't."

DBR: What is the highlight of your career so far?

AL: "For sure my world junior championship of 2006."

TC: "I was not expecting to do so well in my first season of MX1 so I would say that now is the high point of my career."

DBR: What car do you drive?

AL: "At the moment I don't have a car but I do like the 1 series BMW."

TC: "In Rome I have a Nissan 350Z and when in Belgium where I live most of the time I have a Porsche Cayenne."

DBR: And if money were no object?

AL: "I am Italian so I like the Ferrari 430."

TC: "The Lamborghini Murcielago is my favourite car I think."

DBR: Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent 'mechanical issue'?

AL: "No, me never. It is not so nice for the mechanic but if the bike is s**t then I will say so!"

TC: "No, no never."

DBR: Have you ever been arrested?

AL: "No, for sure, never!"

TC: "No, not yet – luckily I escaped on my scooter through Italy's narrow streets!"

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

AL: "I would like more natural technique on the bike."

TC: "I don't know, I like how I am at the moment – perhaps you should ask my girlfriend! I think that in the future maybe a little plastic surgery on my nose but not until after I retire though as my ProGrip goggles fit perfectly at the moment!"

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

AL: "I don't like alcohol so I've never been drunk!"

TC: "In 2005 I went out walking naked in the street after my championship party and then last year after Tyla's party I fell asleep outside in the rain!"

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

AL: "I would like to meet Ricky Carmichael and Valentino Rossi because they are so fast."

TC: "I think Angelina Jolie because she is my favourite actress – there are more but I like all of her films."

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

AL: "A girl, a shelter and some nice food."

TC: "My girlfriend Jill, my bike and Angelina Jolie to do the washing up!"

DBR: What's your favourite film?

AL: "Twilight."

TC: "I like horror films and the last one that I saw was Underworld Evolution."

DBR: What's your most annoying habit?

AL: "I do not know about me but I don't like people who are late!"

TC: "I'm not so organised and Jill moans that I leave booking our flights too late!"

DBR: Where is your favourite place?

AL: "For sure Italy is very nice but I prefer California for the motocross."

TC: "Sicily where I live is really amazing and everything but really I like anywhere that has sun and sea."

DBR: Do you have any fears or phobias?

AL: "No, nothing."

TC: "I don't like the dark, I sleep with a light on."

DBR: What's your most prized possession?

AL: "My family."

TC: "For sure my family are the most important thing to me."

DBR: Favourite race you have been in?

AL: "The world championship round held at Vantaa in Finland in 2006."

TC: "Des Nations at Matterley Basin in 2006."

DBR: Have you ever been in a fight?

AL: "Only once when I was very, very young."

TC: "Yeah, when I was much younger. It was 50/50!"

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

AL: "So-so – for sure it is better winning a race!"

TC: "It depends, 50/50."

DBR: How do you have your steak?

AL: "I like it still red...rare!"

TC: "Medium."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

AL: "Blonde."

TC: "Blonde."

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

AL: "To relax I love to go fishing."

TC: "I collect watches and buy probably one a month. Not necessarily expensive brands just as long as they are cool."

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SOCAL CLASSIC T

CLASSIC ONFIRE PRINT T WITH FRONT
CHEST RETRO MX GRAPHIC
COLOUR WALNUT SIZES S/M/L/X PRICE £15



DOGGER CLASSIC T

CLASSIC ONFIRE PRINT T WITH FRONT
CHEST RETRO MX GRAPHIC
COLOUR BLACK SIZES S/M/L/X PRICE £15



PROFESSOR CLASSIC T

CLASSIC ONFIRE PRINT T WITH FRONT
CHEST RETRO MX GRAPHIC
COLOUR GULL SIZES S/M/L/X PRICE £15



THROTTLE CLASSIC T

CLASSIC ONFIRE PRINT T WITH
LARGE BACK PRINT
COLOUR BLACK SIZES S/M/L/X PRICE £15



FACTORY PREMIUM T

PREMIUM QUALITY 220G T SHIRT WITH
ONFIRE FACTORY RACING PRINT
COLOUR NAVY SIZES M/L/X PRICE £20



WAITING PREMIUM T

PREMIUM QUALITY 220G T SHIRT WITH
RETRO RACE GRAPHIC
COLOUR OLIVE SIZES M/L/X PRICE £20



RIDING PREMIUM T

PREMIUM QUALITY 220G T SHIRT WITH
RETRO RACE GRAPHIC
COLOUR NAVY SIZES M/L/X PRICE £20



SUNDAY PREMIUM T

PREMIUM QUALITY 220G T SHIRT WITH
RETRO RACE GRAPHIC
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DBR2



Stevie gets a lap dance on the Fro Systems stand at Stoneleigh

CHRISTMAS SPIRITS!

MOSTLY VODKA AND BOURBON IN STEVIE'S CASE AS OUR MAN IN THE EMERALD ISLE PAYS A VISIT TO THE DIRT BIKE SHOW...

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by **Sutty**

By now the frenzy commonly known as the Christmas rush will be in full swing and her indoors will have reached her target and then some – the target being to max out all available credit cards.

I have always said that GC performs at his best when it's least expected and in typical underdog fashion the Newtownards man blitzed onto the UK indoor scene, taking a win in the British SX class and a cracking second position in the International final.

Looking down the list of finishers in the British SX final you could be forgiven for thinking that there was not a good entry in this class but that's not altogether true as the tight and demanding track took its toll on some of the pre-race favourites. And in the International SX1 final GC was on it again, finishing a battling second behind KTM's Mike Brown on his 250cc two-stroke Paul Bird Racing Kawasaki.

Other interest for Blarney fans came in the shape of Jonathan Rea Racing Honda rider David Goosen who rode extremely well, recording fifth in the SX1 and fourth in the SX2 international races. Unfortunately, Relentless Suzuki rider Martin Barr was absent due to a crash during the recent Suzuki UK test day at Desertmartin. Hope you are making a good recovery Barty.

Against medical advice and accompanied by reigning Smirnoff speed drinking champion Sam Beattie, the annual pilgrimage to the Stoneleigh Dirt Bike Show was afoot. Thinking about it, there could be no other reason in the world that Sam would get out of bed at 5am but for the promise of adventure, high jinx and the fact that he knew exactly the script of what lay ahead.

Some 30 laps of the Stoneleigh exhibition hall later and the Irish Trade Delegation was in

danger of dehydration. Not to worry though as on lap one it was noted that the MCFederation and the Fro Systems stands had liquid refreshments on offer. In fairness to everyone concerned, I was impressed that the thirst quenching process did not start in earnest until nearly 3.30pm!

Although packed with things to see and do it was noticeable that many of the manufacturers were absent due to a mix of limited budget and/or the fact that the NEC Show was to run a dirt hall. Either way, this appeared to have no effect on attendance. The highlight of the show for me was signing some class acts as Risk Racing-supported athletes for 2010 – namely Shaun Simpson, Graeme Irwin and Natalie Kane. Let's hope these talented and popular young racers can earn plenty of Holeshot Race Gate bonus cheques next season.

The MCUI have announced a dramatic change to the Irish championship format for 2010, one that will see both MX1 and MX2 riders line up together on the start although they will score points as two separate classes. It's not an altogether new idea – the French have run this format very successfully for a number of years. I can see the MCUI point of view on this decision and there will be added value as all riders will get three races on the day.

Perhaps we are heading towards the unification point – one championship and ride what you bring to the party? Then we would have just one real champion at the end of the season – on an island this small it makes sense.

GC was in his usual positive mindset when I spoke to him recently, despite the lack of job offers from any UK motocross team. Gordy is actively pursuing several exciting possibilities as his career moves onto another stage. He's riding

a Kawasaki in the Future West SX series under the Paul Bird Racing banner. Paul's interest in world enduro is well documented and with David Knight moving teams for next season there may yet be another career challenge for GC. However the cards fall for the Newtownards man you can be sure of one thing – Gordon will be racing motorcycles and continue to be involved in off-road riding for many a year to come.

Martin Barr has resigned with Rob Hooper's Relentless Suzuki squad and will remain focused on capturing the British MX2 title next season. The ever smiling Barty turned a potentially disastrous season on its head to claim fourth in the Maxxis series after fighting back to fitness from a pre-season injury. Martin's quiet and unassuming nature sometimes works against him – his talent is unquestionable and he prefers doing his talking on the track, however, maybe he should blow his own trumpet a little bit more?

Tommy Merton will team up with Ian Marshall under the Watt Motorcycles Kawasaki banner to campaign Ulster and Irish championships. The three-time Ulster champ will be on hand to develop the talents of young Marshall who has turned a few heads this year and is tipped as one of the future prospects in the MX2 class.

Double Irish champion Stuart Edmonds put an end to speculation of a colour change for next season and the hard-charging Edmonds will remain loyal to the brand and team who have brought him so much success in the past. Stuart will base himself in the UK and focus his sights on the British championship and the Red Bull Pro Nationals for TM.

Well that's it from me for 2009 – all that remains to do is wish you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

Stevie

NO FEAR

ELEKTRON SERIES
ROGUE SERIES
SPECTRUM SERIES

2010

NO FEAR RANGE

2010 RANGE AVAILABLE NOW

2010 TO
ELEKTRON
SERIES

2010 TO
ROGUE
SERIES

2010 TO
SPECTRUM
SERIES



(A) BLUE JAGGED
Jersey
REF: 2200BL
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200BL
S: 28-40
Formula Glove
REF: 3200BL
S: S-XXL



(B) GREY JAGGED
Jersey
REF: 2200GY
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200GY
S: 28-38
Formula Glove
REF: 3200GY
S: S-XL



(C) CHARGED PATRIOT
Jersey
REF: 2200PB
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200PB
S: 28-38
Formula Glove
REF: 3200BL
S: S-XXL



(D) CHARGED GREEN
Jersey
REF: 2200GN
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200GN
S: 28-38
Formula Glove
REF: 3200BK
S: S-XXL



(E) NITRO
Jersey
REF: 2200RD
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200RD
S: 28-38
Formula Glove
REF: 3200RD
S: S-XL



(A) RAPTOR
Jersey
REF: 2200FI
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201FI
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201FI
S: S-XXL



(B) RAPTOR
Jersey
REF: 2200CN
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201CN
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201CN
S: S-XL



(C) RED
Jersey
REF: 2201RD
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201RD
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201RD
S: S-X



(D) BLUE SLASH
Jersey
REF: 2201BL
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201BL
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201BL
S: S-XL



(E) BLACK SLASH
Jersey
REF: 2201BK
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201BK
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201BK
S: S-XXL



(F) OLMEC BLUE
Jersey
REF: 2201OB
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201OB
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201OB
S: S-XL



(G) OLMEC GREY
Jersey
REF: 2201OG
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201OG
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201OG
S: S-XL



(A) BLACK
Jersey
REF: 2202BK
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202BK
S: 28-40
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL



(B) BLUE
Jersey
REF: 2202BL
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202BL
S: 28-40
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BL
S: S-XL



(C) ORANGE
Jersey
REF: 2202OR
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202OR
S: 28-40
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL



(D) SPIKE STRIP GREEN
Jersey
REF: 2202GN
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202GN
S: 28-38
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL



(E) SPIKE STRIP BLUE
Jersey
REF: 2202BK
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202BK
S: 28-40
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL



(F) PEG LEG
Jersey
REF: 2202PG
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202PG
S: 28-38
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL



(G) SKULIOSIS
Jersey
REF: 2202RS
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202RS
S: 28-38
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202RS
S: S-XXL



(H) GREED
Jersey
REF: 2202NE
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202NE
S: 28-38
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202NE
S: S-XL

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Knighter will be glad to see the back of '09



ONWARDS AND UPWARDS!

WE'RE SURVIVED A CREDIT-CRUNCHING 2009 AND NOW'S THE TIME TO GET EXCITED ABOUT WHAT LIES AHEAD...

Words by Jonty Edmunds Photo by Suttty

It's a wrap. As you read these 'ere scribbings 2009 will be all but done and dusted. And while technically there'll still be a few days remaining before nine becomes 10, as far as racers and racing are concerned it's all about the new season from here on in.

So what of 2009? And, more importantly now winter is here, what has 2010 got to offer? First things first, 2009 wasn't all that bad, was it? In many ways it was pretty bloody good really. With the gloom that surrounded the economy at the start of the year some were predicting almost total meltdown of the motorcycle industry. Thankfully that never happened.

The off-road motorcycle industry has been hit hard. But thankfully it's not been hit as hard as in the US. But one thing that has been a surprise, a positive surprise, is the fact that the number of people racing has remained high. It seems that once bitten by the competition bug it's hard to stay home on a Sunday.

But '09 hasn't been good for all. One rider who will certainly be pleased to finally get to the end of the year is David Knight. Enduring what can best be described as a 'trying' season, Knighter seemingly took one step backwards for every two steps forwards throughout the season. It started with a DNF at The Tough One during his BMW debut and it finished with an equally frustrating and disappointing result at the Indoor Enduro World Cup opener in Sheffield, what we now know to be his final outing on a Kawasaki. Between those two events he did manage to claim the British Enduro Championship title, as

well as a WEC and US GNCC victory. But by Knighter's high standards that's not much to shout about at all.

Back on KTM for 2010, David's return to the Farioli team means he's returning to machinery, people and a set-up that he knows well. Re-establishing himself at the top of the World Enduro Championship is of paramount importance for Knighter next season. And after the year he's had getting back to being #1 is all he's interested in doing.

With the WEC visiting Turkey for the first time ever in 2010, as well as welcoming women with open arms – and how else would you want to welcome them? – the series should be every bit as strong and exciting as it was in 2009. With Antoine Meo confirmed as competing in E1 and with Mika Ahola and Juha Salminen both known to be competing in E2, Johnny Aubert and KTM have yet to announce officially which class the Frenchman will compete in. If he does switch to E1, which is where he's rumoured to be heading, 2010 will be his first season of WEC competition away from a 450cc four-stroke. What Aubert does will decide where Ivan Cervantes competes. The Spaniard may end up in E1 but seems most likely to be headed for E2. Either way, Knighter will be KTM's number one rider in E3.

Our domestic enduro scene looks to be good and healthy for 2010 with the British Enduro Championship set to be bigger and better than it has in many a recent year. From its start in East Anglia in February it returns to Scotland in

April before three consecutive summer events in Wales and then the season-ending event in Hampshire in September. With six strong two-day events spread out, more or less, over the whole year the BEC certainly appears to be on the up-and-up.

New for 2010 is the British Enduro Sprint Championship which together with the BEC ensures national championship level enduro events each and every month from February to September. Run early in the year so as to fill the traditional gap in the BEC between the opening round in February and the Welsh summer events starting in June, the BEC – like the BEC – will cater for riders of varying ability while using an exciting new class structure and event format.

Instead of the traditional Championship, Expert and Clubman classes the BEC will, in no particular order, feature an Under 23 class, an Expert class and an Elite class. With the best-of-the-best racing in the Elite class, in the U23 category it's hoped all 'junior' class riders will be able to compete together irrespective of everything but age. The Expert class, well, that's where the Experts will race.

And it's racing that's the name of the game as far as the BEC is concerned. Stripping away from a traditional enduro all but the special tests the new discipline in several ways has much in common with motocross. Gone is the need for time cards, far away service points, the need for lights and a road legal bike. It'll be all about exciting racing action as well as the chance to win British championship titles...

KTM 350 SX-F

Most dirt bike fans spent at least 10 minutes dribbling over this bad boy – a pre-production electric start 350cc four-stroke motocross race machine – over on the KTM stand. Expected to be raced in the MX1 GPs this year by reigning world champ Antonio Cairoli and over in the States by Mike Alessi, this mid-size machine might just be about to become the winningest weapon in MX history...



OPENING TIME?

COULD THE OFF ROAD ZONE AT THE NEC BIKE SHOW BE THE KEY THAT UNLOCKS THE DIRT BIKE DOOR TO A WHOLE NEW AUDIENCE?

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Suttty

As an opportunity to stick the wonderful world of off-road directly under the collective noses of 120,000 mostly mainstream road bike fans you can't get any better than the annual Carol Nash International Motorcycle and Scooter Show.

The show – running for 10 full days at Birmingham's NEC – is the biggest stand-alone event of its type in the UK and the country's third largest annual consumer show. But traditionally it's been a bit of a disappointment for the off-road industry.

For 2009 this all changed with the inclusion of an off-road dedicated zone. This was created off the back of a market research exercise conducted at the 2008 show that identified an interest in seeing a bigger dirt bike presence.

"Last year 26,000 visitors to the show expressed an interest to include the off-road bike sector within the show's plans for 2009," explains Finlay McAllan, MD of organisers MCI Exhibitions. "The inclusion of the Off Road Zone this year has added a new dimension to the event where, for the first time, every facet of motorcycling is now represented."

DBR and our sister publication T+MX have been enthusiastic backers of the plans for a simple reason – we want to help expand the market by attracting new blood into off-road riding. We even went as far as to produce a one-off 'Dirt Handbook' to give out to visitors to the show. A stripped down explanation of the different off-road disciplines containing basic info and advice plus useful contact numbers, the Dirt Handbook was designed to help steer mainstream bikers towards off-road riding.

Away from the Off Road Zone in the main halls Suzuki, Kawasaki and Yamaha all chose to showcase their 2010 off-road range at the NEC, further boosting the show's dirt bike content. And KTM also had a major stand where they unveiled their all-new 350 SX-F to a British audience for the first time.

Other off-road tailored attractions included a Suzuki-backed indoor try-out on a simple dirt oval plus Barry Johnson's slightly more advanced indoor Yamaha Off-Road Experience which took in parts of the Future West SX track where the opening two rounds of the British championship were held on back-to-back

Saturday nights.

"To stage the opening rounds of the Future West ACU British Supercross Championship while welcoming so many off-road retailers and the Off Road Experience into the NEC has given more people the chance to get up close to the dirt bike world," continues Finlay. "These features represent the first of many steps that we'll be taking to expand this element of the show and we'll be working very closely with the exhibitors that have supported us this year to ensure there is a long association between the show and the off-road market. We're in it for the long run!"

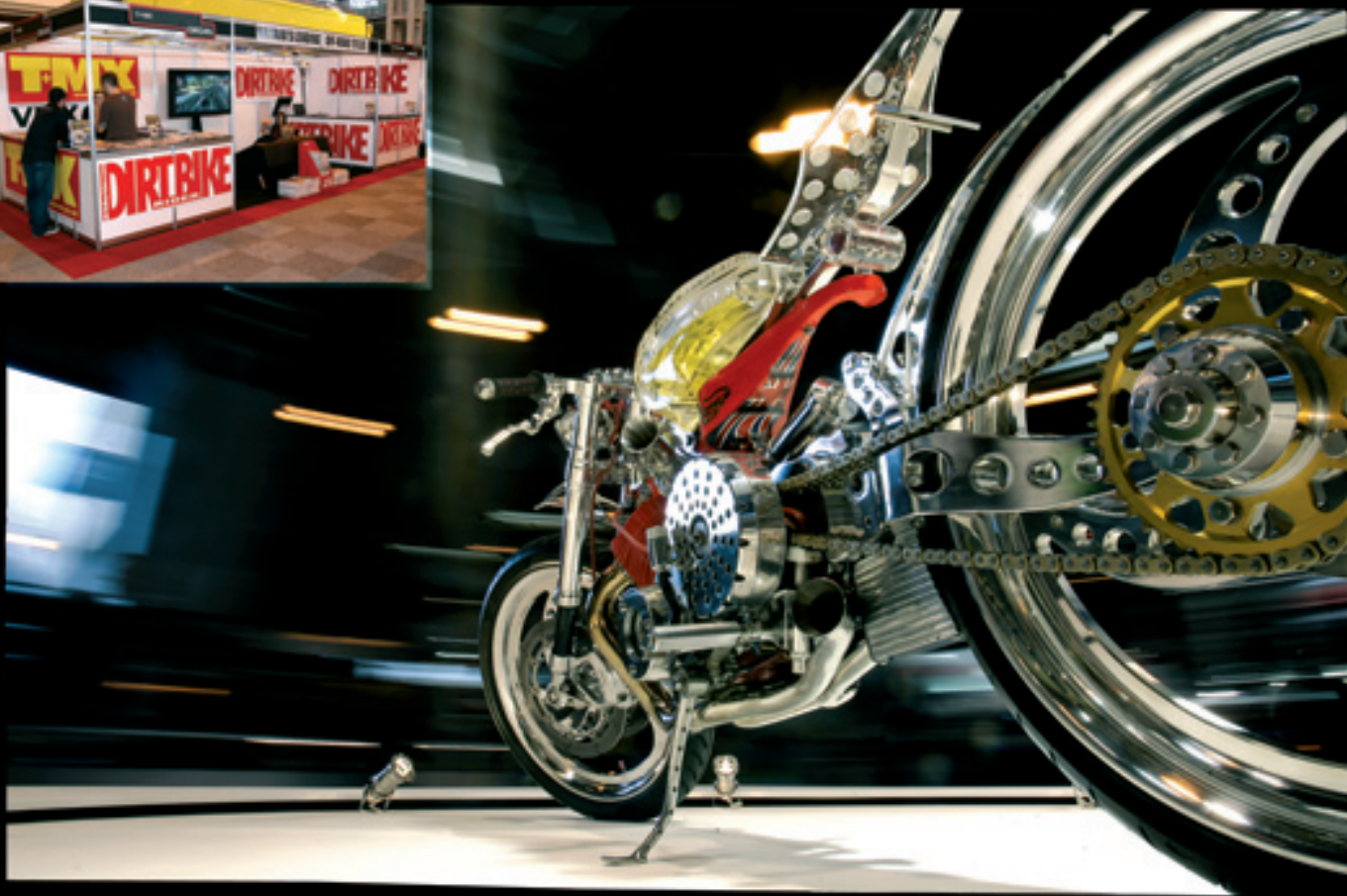
So how did the show go from an off-road perspective? Well, despite a couple of quiet days early on interest picked up over the first weekend and the stand holders in the Off Road Zone – including the AMCA, ACU, MCF, CGH Imports, Fro Systems and ourselves – saw interest pick up. As DBR went to press there were still four days to go but the impact of the Off Road Zone is something that will be measured over a lot longer period than a few days. As Finlay put it, it's all about being in it for the long run...

SUZUKI RMX450Z

Brand-new for 2010 in the Suzuki camp is this RMX450Z that takes all the best bits from the world MX1 championship winning RM-Z and makes it much more woods friendly. The key accessories here are the headlight assembly, electric-starter and an 18 inch rear wheel that along with a multitude of engine and suspension mods make the RMX450Z more usable in an off-road environment. Expect a full test on this sweet looking machine in the very next issue of DBR...

BEST IN SHOW

A highly-skilled and devastatingly good looking board of judges from the JP Off-Road printed product committee voted the DBR/T+MX News stand 'Best in Show' with props in particular being given for the free-to-show-visitors 24-page Dirt Handbook. As well as serving up a steaming portion of the very finest in off-road related inked paper products the DBR/T+MX booth also hosted regular race-yeer-mates PS3 MX Vs ATV Untamed sessions on its 52 inch widescreen TV.



Hodders - loves a good helmet



CUSTOMISED RIDES!

Although it's got feck all to do with the off-road world we've got to show you this rather spectacular custom bike that got twice as much attention as the lycra-clad lovelies on the Carole Nash stand!

CHERRY POPPERS!

Slap bang between the off-road goodness of Hall 5 and the slick-tyred shenanigans going on in Hall 3 is where the Suzuki Off-Road Experience team hung loose for the 10-day duration of the NEC show. Offering newcomers the opportunity to try off-road motorcycling for the first time on DR-Z70 and 125cc machines the SORE squad were kept busy all week as a continuous stream of happy show visitors got down to it in the dirt. Never ones to miss out on some dirty fun Slick Rick our marketing guru, Hodders our angry admin manager and sales call girl Candice all took the opportunity to try off-road riding for the first time and literally loved it!

NO FEAR SPECTRUM RACEWEAR

If you've ever had that dream where you wake up between The Veronicas' sisters with them going 'ooh ooh' while you go 'aah aah la-la-la-la ah-la-la-la' you probably didn't want to wake up which is a similar situation to what you'd be in if you were dreaming about wearing the latest Spectrum kit from No Fear. Of course, with prices so low you don't just have to dream about it – it's actually possible to slip into Carlsbad's finest which probably can't be said about Australia's. Check out the new No Fear line at www.mxnofeareurope.com right now!

Price: Pants £85 Jersey £25
Gloves £21
Supplier: mxnofeareurope.com
Contact: 0289 092 3348



ONE INDUSTRIES KOMBAT HELMET

It's a widely spread misconception that Robin yelled "Holy Helmets!" to Batman in Episode #9 of series three – How to Hatch a Dinosaur – when in fact the script called for Burt Ward to say 'holey helmets' as an observation and not a yelp of surprise. Helmet specialists among you are probably agreeing wholeheartedly with Robin's statement right now because if it weren't for holes none of us would be able to put on or see out of the aforementioned articles of protective motorcycle clothing.

If you've read this far you're probably thinking what the heck has that got to do with this rather fetching Kombat brain-bucket from One Industries? Well the eagle-eyed among you will no doubt have spotted by now that this Kombat also has fitment and viewing holes in – as well as a vent hole or two which helps keep your noggin cool in the heat of battle. That's about as good an explanation as you're gonna get here so maybe a visit to your local One Industries dealer – where you can try one on and see the full range of colours available – will be more helpful...

Price: from £99.99
Supplier: oneindustrieseurope.co.uk
Contact: 01404 549696



MUC-OFF DISC BRAKE CLEANER

You can't beat big cans and now that Muc-Off's Disc Brake Cleaner is available in a size that's so large that Muc-Off themselves describe it as being their 'Big Guy 750ml workshop edition' who are we to discourage you from reaching out and giving one a good squeeze. But remember that in order to rapidly remove oil, grease, brake fluid and grime from your brake discs then you need to be squeezing it in the right direction – at your brake discs and that!

Price: £9.99
Supplier: muc-off.com
Contact: 01202 307790



SHIFT RACING FACTION RACEWEAR

Shift's Faction racewear is their top o' the line riding kit range and will be used in anger throughout 2010 by Tommy 'Gun' Searle in the AMA SX and MX championships. Coming in a selection of colours and styles the Faction range is well built, well priced and well stylish!

Price: Pants £115 Jersey £32
Supplier: shifteurope.com
Contact: 0191 487 6100



ANSWER RACING SYNCHRON RACEWEAR

If like me your Christmas bonus consists of being thankful you're allowed to spend the 25th and 26th away from the office then you won't be blowing it 'all' on a new set of racewear – booo! But don't let the penny-pinching bar stewards get you down because costing a thrupenny bit less than 100 bones this full set of Answer Synchron kit ain't gonna break the bank and might just be the thing to treat yourself to this Chrismo. So screw the wife (figuratively speaking of course), forget the kids and misplace the utilities bill then pick a colour, select your size and call your local Answer emporium right away. Yay!

Price: Pants £59.99 Jersey £19.99 Gloves £19.99
Supplier: apico.co.uk
Contact: 0870 777 9201

KAWASAKI WORKSHOP MAT AND STAND

Make your Kawasaki riding mates green with envy by rocking up to the race track with this rather racy Team Green workshop mat and bike stand that are just the thing for hoisting your bike up on for essential fettling between motos.

Price: Mat £55.95 Stand £46.95
Supplier: kawasaki.co.uk
Contact: 01628 856750



HELMET SKINZ HELMET PROTECTOR

Helmet Skinz wrap your helmet in a skin tight barrier to protect against scratches, rocks and other damaging debris. So whether you want to protect your new helmet or put a fresh design on your old one Helmet Skinz are just the product you need and unlike your helmet are completely machine washable!

Price: £22.49
Supplier: helmetskinz.co.uk
Contact: sales@helmetskinz.co.uk

SKULLCANDY TROY LEE DESIGNS HESH HEADPHONES

The world's #1 moto-artist Troy Lee and Skullcandy have teamed up to bring you these Day in the Dirt Hesh headphones. By melding Troy's classic designs and Skullcandy's premium sound quality together this product is the dog's danglies for any motocross fan who doesn't like sharing what they're listening to with the world.

Price: £49.99
Supplier: dirtbikebitz.com
Contact: 0845 6434222



€ BAD BILLY!

etnies

What the hell is wrong with Billy MacKenzie? The guy's got more talent in his little finger than most of us have got in our entire bodies and he chooses to throw it all away and disappear off to Australia where if he's not careful he's going to be forgotten about.

I've always been a big Billy fan – ever since he moved into the adults I've loved to watch him race. Okay, so no-one can throw a lead away like he can and you never know whether or not he's going to crash but that's part of his appeal for me. In a sport that's becoming more and more dominated by robots thanking their sponsors you can rely on Mac211 to be himself – controversial, out-spoken and entertaining.

So why all the way to the other side of the world? Can't he cut it over here anymore? For someone who always looks like they're giving it 110 per cent on the track he seems to have taken the easy option and bailed out of a championship he struggles in to a championship he should win. And what's with all the partying in Thailand? It's about time he got his head down and worked. It's a lesson Jamie Dobb learned late on in his career – luckily he was still in time to win a world title – and I hope it's a lesson Billy learns himself before it's too late.

Steve, Brighton

Whoooooaaaaaa! Calm down fella! First off, Billy does work hard – unfortunately, the kind of injuries he had this season made staying bike fit a tough deal for the wee muncher. And why shouldn't he kick back in Thailand? He's had a harder season than most riders and is entitled to a little R n' R – and if you turn to his Mac211 column on pages 136-137 you'll find out that he's already back in the saddle and getting ready to race. As for taking the easy option, well, we can see where you get that opinion from but personally we reckon he's just taking time out of the stresses of the GP scene to remotivate himself. And he's hardly going to be forgotten while he writes for DBR is he?



FIT FOOD!

At local motocross clubs there is always, obviously, a burger van. There is never anything that is moderately healthy which isn't convenient to the rider as he/she does not want to be stuffing themselves with rubbish before a long day's racing.

I propose there should be more healthy options such as pasta – something that should support the rider with energy, not fat?

Aidan, Burgess Hill

It's a good point well made Aidan but until riders start voting with their feet and boycotting the burger vans we can't see anything changing. So why not make like the pros and prepare your own healthy lunches at home and leave the burger van to all the fat dads?

LADY LEARNER

After years of following my partner around the UK and to Erzberg watching him race I decided that if you can't beat them join them! So I bought a KTM BW85 which my other half promptly pimped.

I bought all the gear and I was ready to go – my rant is that for an adult learner finding somewhere to learn is a nightmare. It seems that although a massively popular sport, local councils see riders and the sport as a menace unlike in other countries where riding is encouraged!

I can mainly only ride on a weekend due to work, the main practice tracks are too advanced for a girl who is a total novice and the kids' tracks cannot be used by adults on a weekend due to insurance restraints. I have done my basic learning at a friend's track but I don't want to take advantage of his kindness. Am I missing something or is this a common problem?

My other half loves the fact that I can now ride but we now have a battle for DBR when it drops on the mat each month! Thanks for your help and your fab mag.

Jo, Harrogate

Skills Jo – there's no reason why racing off-road bikes should be a men-only deal and the more ladies out there the better so welcome aboard! Sadly our sport isn't massively popular and – being cynical for a second – councils seem to think they'll get more votes by closing tracks down than by opening them up. If you can't get on the nipper-ripper tracks how about investing in some proper coaching? This way you'll be confident to take to the main practice tracks in no time. Good luck...

Left: Billy and Doogs let off steam in Thailand – why shouldn't riders be allowed to party off-season?

WELCOME BACK!

I've returned to the MX world after 20 years doing other things like raising a kid etc but now my little girl's got a quad and I've been hooked again. But things have changed – for a start we've now got four-stroke MXers...

What I'm most peeved about are these cheap, crappy pit bikes that are everywhere. I have a good relationship with a farmer and if you ride where he tells you it's okay but these kids don't listen. They ride by houses, near horses and ride to and from fields around the estate without helmets and no road sense at all. And who do you think the police hassle?

Yep, a 40-year-old man with 10-year-old daughter who was at the back end of the fields in full safety kit and with permission while this morning five minicrap riders went past my house into the field and were ripping up and down behind houses. I think the police are afraid of these kids and think it's easier to pick on a normal person who won't likely pull a knife!

Anyway, rant over – your mag's as good as I remember. The last time I saw a copy was five or six years ago when someone left one on a train.

Steve, via email

Welcome back Steve – and good for you for doing things the right way so even if you do get tickled by the long arm of the law they haven't got a leg to stand on. Pit bikes are a menace when they're used illegally and it sounds like the constabulary in your area would rather go for a soft target than burn off a few doughnuts by chasing after the local tearaways...

THUMPER LOVE

Hey DBR, loving the mag! I'm ranting about the lack of decent four-strokes available for a 12-year-old guy like me. I mean, I've tried a two-smoker (my friend's got a YZ85) but I just don't feel as comfortable or confident on it as I am on a good old four-stroke.

I've got a 110cc pit bike at the moment that is great fun – don't get me wrong – but I am looking for a more serious bike as I want to start racing. Any ideas? Please help me.

Jay, Chepstow

If you want to race a four-stroke then at your age your only choice is going to be a CRF150 Honda – sorry Jay but you're not exactly spoilt for choice. You've got a few more years before you'll be old enough to race a 250F so why not give two-strokes another try? Maybe you didn't enjoy your mate's YZ because you didn't give yourself enough time to get a feel for the different power characteristics? You never know, the more you ride 'em maybe the more you'll like 'em!

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk

All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address. Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

LETTERS WIN PRIZES

Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our star prize – this month a pair of **Etnies Santiago shoes**.



GORDY'S GOER!

Forget the brand-new Beemers, super-sweet Suzis, bad-ass choppers and weird and wonderful concept bikes on display at the NEC Show – the machine we were most interested in was the 250cc two-smoker in a KX250F frame used to great effect by Gordon Crockard in the Future West SX races. So much so in fact we gave Angry Geoff Walker the job of taking an in-depth look at GC's Kawasaki for next month's mag...

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HIT, MISS AND MAYBE...

FOR STEPHEN SWORD 2009 WAS ALMOST LIKE TWO SEPARATE SEASONS ROLLED INTO ONE – AT HOME HE DOMINATED TO WIN HIS FOURTH BRITISH TITLE WHILE IN THE GPs HE LOOKED A SHADOW OF HIS TRUE SELF. WITH THE 29-YEAR-OLD NOW MOVING TO THE MX1 DIVISION WE CAUGHT UP WITH THE NEW FACTORY CCM PILOT TO FIND OUT WHAT WENT RIGHT, WHAT WENT WRONG AND WHAT HE'S AIMING FOR IN 2010...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty**

For Stephen Sword the 2009 season has been a case of hit and miss. Sure, he won his fourth British championship relatively easily in his first – and last – year for the Red Bull KTM UK team but on the world stage he consistently under-performed and for an out-and-out racer like Swordy it was a bitterly disappointing GP swansong in the MX2 division.

Now signed to the factory CCM team for 2010, the 29-year-old is having his second shot at the MX1 class and his goals are very similar to the ones he started 2009 with.

"I don't want to put pressure on myself but you do need to put yourself under a certain amount of pressure to do well y'know. And I'm looking forward to next season because it's a new challenge – it's a 450 which I really like and it's a new team and I think I can bring something to the team. They're looking for wins in the British championship and the title and top 10s or better in the GPs so their goals are good and realistic in relation to what I can do for them."

Swordy's debut season on a 450F – 2006 – ended prematurely. Racing for Jan De Groot's factory Kawasaki team, he smashed his right heel and broke his tibia and fibula in a horror crash at the German GP. It was a potentially career-ending injury that cost the Scot his factory MX1 ride and when he did defy the odds to return to racing in '07 it was back in the MX2 class.

A new Youthstream age limit comes into effect in 2010 meaning Swordy has to move up to MX1 whether he likes it or not. Luckily, he's relishing the prospect of graduating to a 450 four years after his ill-fated initial debut.

"I would have gone back to MX1 anyway. I'm 29 now and I need fresh challenges. I really enjoy riding the MX2 bike but there's a lot of young guys there now who are hungry and I feel as though I've maybe outgrown the class a little bit. I've been there once before – it wasn't my best year but that wasn't because I didn't like the bike –

and when I jumped on the 450 KTM at the end of this year I felt stronger than I did back in '06. Mentally and physically."

Before we get too bogged-down in his thoughts on next season though, what exactly happened in 2009 and how could Swordy be on fire one weekend in the domestic series only to misfire the following weekend in the GPs?

"One part of the season's been good – I pretty much dominated the British championship and was pleased to win that but the world championship never really got going for me. I don't really know why but it took me a little bit of time to get going with the bike – nothing to do with the team or anything. But I struggled with a set-up and I think I let that get to me a little bit more than it should have done."

"Then when I did get going the British picked up really well but I got a little hand injury in Germany and had to have two or three weeks off. I obviously didn't score in the German GP and then didn't go to Sweden or Latvia so there were a lot of points lost there. By that point I wasn't looking like even getting in the top 10 at GPs so my priority then was to get the British title wrapped up because that was KTM UK's first priority."

"Because I didn't have such a good season in the GPs I needed to win the British just to make myself feel a bit better. I took that time off, got my hand right and came back for Lyng and won both races there so that was a good decision."

"I'm really disappointed with the GPs and I think once I had a few bad results and wasn't where I wanted to be I just let it get to me. It wasn't down to my fitness and it wasn't down to the bike – it just didn't happen for me at GPs. It was tough this year in MX2 – a tough, tough class – and it just never took off for me. After that the British was my priority and that was where all my money was so I had to make sure I got that wrapped up."

That's enough on 2009 which is, after all, history. >>



Swordy gets on the gas at the Hawkstone round of the British championship

SWORDY ON...

MXdN SELECTION >>

Swordy's represented Team GB at the Motocross des Nations on a number of occasions and his omission from the '09 squad caused controversy for a few reasons.

He was left out of original Team Manager Mark Eastwood's initial squad with US-based Tommy Searle getting the MX2 ride. Then, when Brad Anderson and Carl Nunn both picked up injuries, he was over-looked again when Billy MacKenzie and Shaun Simpson were drafted in by new Team Manager Steve Dixon – despite Swordy beating both of them on a 450 at Landrake.

And although he professes that he's "over it" now it's a situation that still rankles Stephen a couple of months on.

"I wanted to get on the 450 to get ready for next year, ride with some of the riders I'm going to be riding with in the British and the world and give myself a shot at the des Nations – I wasn't in it last year at Donington and it's one I want to be in. So as soon as the British was wrapped up which was the main priority I got on the 450 straight away.

"I wanted to try and get in the des Nations but quite frankly I could have won the last MX1 GP and probably still wouldn't have got in. But I felt I'd done enough to get the final slot. The whole point of the des Nations for me is to take the best team at the time and I don't think they did that because I was the one on form."



Despite dominating the domestic series Swordy struggled in the GPs

Even a DNF at Foxhill couldn't stop the Scot from tying up the Maxxis MX2 title a round early



So what about the future? We've already touched upon his return to the MX1 ranks and his new ride with CCM but this time last year, on the eve to his move to KTM, Swordy was relishing his return to the Austrian marque for a proven team on proven machinery. Now he's going to a team just entering its second year in existence on a bike with only one season of competition under its belt.

"I'm excited because I know people are thinking I won't do well on the bike but TC [new team-mate Tom Church] has had probably the best year he's ever had in the GPs and he would have finished better in the British if it wasn't for a few niggly problems at the beginning of the year. But with any new team and new bike you're going to have problems and unfortunately for them at the beginning of the year their races

were their tests and they've ironed out all those problems now.

"At the end of the day it's a bike and if anything I can tailor it more to myself more than any other bike because they can do what they want. If there's something better they can just stick it on – they don't have to stick to standard parts because it's not a standard bike."

And although the bike – basically a custom-built chassis around an '09 YZF450 motor – will be unfamiliar, the team will be virtually a home from home for Swordy with CCM's Director of MX Dave Thorpe responsible for training him for a number of years.

"Sure, obviously working with Dave is normal for me. And Tom I've been friends with for years and have been team-mates with him before and my mechanic Ryan [Thorpe] I've worked with

before at Molson. So the people around me are really good and there's no strangers in the team for me. They've got a good set-up and they want to do well and I'll do everything possible to make sure I ride that bike as best I can.

"This year's been quite hectic with the little one being born [Swordy's partner Jodie gave birth to their son Ayrtan in April] and I think next year I'll feel better in my head that everything's settled down a bit with a good winter of training and testing behind me."

With no experience in MX1 GPs since '06 Swordy's not had a chance to gauge his speed on a 450 against the best in the world – although it's a safe bet to say the usual suspects like Tony Cairoli, David Philippaerts and Clement Desalle will be the men to beat. But after his winning ride in MX1 at the final round of the British championship at Landrake in September he knows he's got the pace to run at the front in the Maxxis series.

"I think there will be a few riders up there next year. I think TC will be good next year and there's no doubt that Brad [Anderson – the defending champ] will be up for it again. And I think that Gareth Swanepoel will be good – he seems to not be able to be consistent enough to win the title but he's fast. Then there's the likes of Carl Nunn and James Noble – all those guys who can have really good races. But I think there's only one or two who can be consistent every round.

"I've won four British titles already so I'll just prepare as I would normally. I feel confident that I can do it and the bike will be good enough so I don't see any reason why I can't do it again.

"I know how to win championships and I'll be there every round. But there's a lot of work to be done from now to then but I'm looking forward to it."

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Leading team-mate Jake Nicholls (#45)
– although they started the season
with a good relationship the pair didn't
end '09 on the best of terms



SWORDY ON...

TEAM TENSIONS >>>

Once the bright young thing of British MX, it's fair to say that Swordy's now drifting towards elder statesman status and this was clearly evident in 2009 when he lined up in the Red Bull KTM UK team alongside teenage hot shots Jake Nicholls and Graeme Irwin.

"I suppose I was the role model figure in the team. Roger Magee [team owner] had two young guys and me. Graeme was staying with Jodie's mum so we trained quite a lot in the week and I reckon he dragged me down a bit! Seriously though, he's a good kid who trains and rides really hard."

Swordy started the season turning laps at Jake's private practice track but it's safe to say their relationship 'cooled' as the on-track action heated up.

"I got on well with Jake. Then in Spain I passed him on the last lap. It was an aggressive pass but we didn't touch and I didn't have any intention of taking him down but ever since that day he hasn't been the same with me. It doesn't bother me – if you're going to race at the front then it's not just me who'll do that sort of thing to you. If you want to race with the big boys then you'll have to get used to that."

"He's improved through the year and I think if he looks back to that race that's probably what geared him up for the rest of the year – he got a bit of determination after that and started riding with a bit more aggression, in my eyes anyway. So if anything I did him a favour. He then upped his game. And I certainly haven't got a problem with Jake and I hope he does well in 2010."

Although the team set-up wasn't ideal for Swordy – something that made its presence felt more on the world stage than on the domestic scene where the pace isn't as relentless – he's full of praise for Roger Magee and the Red Bull KTM UK outfit.

"It's quite a small team – especially coming from Molson where there were a lot of people doing a lot of jobs. Basically we just had the two mechanics and Roger was running it. So it was a smaller team but we had good kit, I just felt as though we might have needed a bit more help but that wasn't to be and I had to do a bit of travelling backwards and forwards to Holland [where the team was based] to try and get the bike set up how I wanted it."

"The team was hoping I was going to be somewhere near the front in the world but when I didn't get the results I wanted they tried to help me. They didn't give me any pressure at all – if anything the only pressure came from myself and I think that's what did it for me, I put myself under too much pressure to perform."

PUPPY LOVE!

ONCE THE DOMINANT FORCE IN SMALL-BORE MX, SUZUKI ARE NOW BACK AT THE TOP OF THEIR GAME WITH THE 2010 RM-Z250 AND JEFF'S GOT THE HOTS FOR THE LITTLE YELLOW RIPPER...

Words by **Jeff Perrett** Photos by **Jason Critchell**

The 2010 Suzuki RMZ250 has changed – probably more than you think. Could it be the strongest bike in the MX2 class? Well, it's certainly in with a shout... I've got to be honest here, when I got the call to go to Desertmartin to test this bike I did wonder why.

It seemed a little odd to go to Northern Ireland for a day when we couldn't have tested on the mainland. My curiosity got the better of me by the time I got to the airport so I had to ask Luke Plummer of Suzuki why.

"It's mostly all new with plenty of changes so we wanted to do something a little different for the launch," reckoned Luke which kinda surprised me – after all, I'd given it the once-over at the Dirt Bike Show and it didn't look too different so as far as I was concerned any changes would only be subtle.

Obviously, that's not the case and on closer inspection there's been major refinements to this bike, refinements that I have to say are all very much for the better. The obvious change is the new fuel injection but then there's a host of other tweaks like changes to the compression ratios, gearbox, frame and swingarm. Clearly Suzuki are working hard to try and dominate the smaller bike class like they used to back in the day.

It would be fair to say that Suzuki practically built their reputation from their success in the 125s after going on a 10-year world title win-streak from Gaston Rahier in 1975 to Michele Rinaldi in 1984. But that was then and this is now. Suzuki's last world title in the smaller bike class was with Pedro Tragar in 1993 – however, they've had a lot more success in America of late with Ryan Dungey and it looks like they are on the road to their former glories with a good programme and more importantly a good bike.

Contrary to the myth, looks aren't everything but they do help and there's something about the new Suzukis that make them more appealing for 2010. Personally, I think it's replacing the blue as the second colour for black – it just seems to look more dynamic to me. Of course, that's an easy change to make and having a mean looking bike is one thing but that will only get you so far. So the Suzuki bods got to work and have made a bike that not only looks good but makes you feel good when you ride it – well it did for me anyway.


The wheelbase is 10mm longer and there's a new beefier swingarm which along with the new frame dimensions make the bike more stable particularly at high speeds and over the bigger bumps. The swingarm pivot point is now 6.7mm further forward with double bearings on each side of the shaft. The suspension is very well balanced and from the moment I rode out onto the track I felt part of the bike – the ergonomics felt that good. I always felt like I was in the right position on the bike without ever

having to really think about it whereas sometimes on other bikes you feel you have to position yourself to get the bike to work. The track was quite slimy but this bike gave me the confidence to cut loose a little and let it squirm about.

The forks have different internals and settings and they are better for it for sure. They are a little harder with the spring rate up from 4.4 to 4.7 plus 5ml more oil and the springs themselves are 1mm longer. It all doesn't sound much but those little measurements make a whole world of difference, something I'm still trying to preach to most women I meet!

With the improved fork Suzuki have been able to limit the number of adjustment clicks. The rebound is now down from 14 to 10 and the compression drops from 11 to 9 (I feel like Dale Winton doing Pick of the Pops here) but, like I said, they are improved and still offer plenty of scope.

The rear shock has also gone under the knife in a similar vein. The spring rate is also harder but the spring set rate's 1.5mm shorter, there's 12mm less oil but considerably more rebound adjustment. It works well with the swingarm and frame for sure and really tracks well through rutted corners – and there were plenty of them at Desertmartin. I personally would have it a little softer at the top of the stroke to take the edge off the sharp-edged braking bumps but with more time I think the



Jeffrey lets rip around Desertmartin, making the most of the new RM-Z's "super-sharp" reactions

>>





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RM-Z 250

SPECIFICATIONS >>

Capacity: 249cc

Bore and stroke: 77mm x 53.6mm

Transmission: Five-speed

Fuel capacity: 6.5 litres

Front suspension: 47mm Showa
(310mm travel)

Rear suspension: Showa
(310mm travel)

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Ground clearance: 345mm

Seat height: 955mm

Kerb weight: 105kg



adjustment is there to get that pretty well dialled. Other than that it really does feel nice and gives you confidence from the outset and even the higher line gripper seat helped, especially in the snotty conditions.

Thankfully the motor doesn't let all that good work down. It's strong with real smooth torque, so much so you can actually hear the difference. Maybe it's the new silencer with larger internal dimensions giving it a different pitch but it does seem to sound really throaty, certainly more than ever before. This bike is particularly strong on the transfer from bottom to mid and that's great because in the MX2 class in particular corner speed is essential. To be fair the motor has had the lion's share of the mods and it's where this bike has improved the most.

There's more compression for starters as that goes up from 13.4:1 to 13.5:1. The new transmission ratios bear that in mind and now the primary ratio is 63/19 as opposed to 2009's 61/19 and the sprockets have gone up one on both the front and rear to 49/13. There's a new piston and thicker cylinderhead gasket and camshaft housing that now has the oil passage added to it.

The hollow forged steel camshafts have new internal and external dimensions. The crankcase is a semi-dry sump system with reed valve and separate oil chambers for the transmission and crankshaft. Two trochoid oil pumps are connected by a shaft through the crankcases to give improved delivery and efficiency. The clutch has a great feeling and is now lighter with a longer spring, going from 45.2 to 50.7mm.

Put all that with the new super-sharp response of the fuel injection and

you have a bike that delivers strong useable power when you need it. Suzuki were of course on the ball with the EFI on their 450 so they've had time to play around with it under race conditions and put that input into the RMZ250.

With six main sensors placed in and around the engine capturing data this bike is more sensitive than a drunk chick watching a rom-com but luckily much easier to understand. You certainly know where you are with it and how it's going to react. It doesn't miss a beat on delivery, not once.

Of course you can map the ECM to your needs with a mode select coupler. The white coupler is to make it leaner for rain or high humidity and the grey richer for lower humidity or high-speed running conditions. With the aid of the Yoshimura tuner you can really fine tune the bike's performance with multiple positions for the RPM, throttle position, fuel volume and ignition timing. For the full effect of becoming a bod just get a big white overcoat and some big square glasses and call yourself 'Brains'. Just in case you're not though there's an indicator light to make sure you're doing it right.

Unfortunately, there's not an indicator light to make sure you're doing it right out on the track but to be fair Suzuki have produced a bike to better your chances. It's a solid and a definite improvement on the 2009 model and one that may well see them become a dominant force in the small bike class once again – not just at the high-end pro ranks but also at club meetings all around the world...

Great suspension and handling and a sweet motor help make the new KX250F a little ripper

GREEN BELTER!

FOR 2010 KAWASAKI HAVE PRODUCED A TWO-FIDDY THUMPER WITH SUPERB SUSPENSION, HOT HANDLING AND A MOTOR TO DIE FOR...

Words by **Ed Bradley** Photos by **Sutty**

To get a really good feel for testing the 2010 KX250F I decided to take a risk and left the track rough after a busy Wednesday practice at DMP so that the bike could be tested under proper race conditions – big braking bumps, high berms, deep ruts and rutty jump faces – to really get to grips with what the bike had to offer.

Clive who brought the bikes up from Kawasaki said he didn't really know what's changed on this new model. He's a mechanic who usually works on road burners so I guess he can be excused but one thing he did know is that the bike uses a new high-performance piston featuring a bridged-box bottom to increase engine performance and durability. This may prevent you being pistonbroke as you clock up the hours of riding your new KXF! Boom, boom!

Looking back over this year's racing results, Gautier Paulin has put himself on the top of the

box at a number of MX2 races and Christophe Pourcel won the AMA SX lites championship and came close to the Nats title on the KX250F. So with a machine race-proven at the highest level in the world – and assuming these top riders have been providing some sort of developmental feedback – what's involved with making this green machine even better than the '09 bike?

Starting with the engine, the new piston is the first mass-produced bridged-box bottom with internal bracing piston which is lighter and has a different profile to improve combustion. Kawasaki have increased the height of the cylinder to keep the same compression ratio of 13.2:1. The big-end bearing is 1mm thicker and features a copper plate on its cage and a longer crank pin to improve reliability. The oil pump rotors have also been modified – there's a larger feed pump rotor to increase oil flow and a smaller scavenger pump rotor, again increasing reliability of the engine.

These modifications suggest this new machine will rev quicker with the lighter piston so to help keep the little ripper's temperature down the radiators are 10mm thicker and 4mm wider and the cylinderhead water jackets have been tweaked and tickled.

The exhaust has slightly changed to have a longer head and shorter mid-section for better performance at low rpm while the frame has been tweaked in a number of ways to improve the all-important rider feel, position and control.

Firstly, the frame is 6mm slimmer which narrows near the bend below the seat for a better riding position, then widens at the ankles for better grip when throwing the bike around the race track. There's also a new design around the fuel tank and both the frame and subframe are considerably lighter than the 2009 model. Finally, the swingarm pivot has been moved higher in the frame for improved rear wheel traction.

The suspension units are the same with a



slightly different valving to increase stability on corner entry by reducing rear end kick. The biggest change, however, is in the linkage which has different ratios and longer leverage arms that allow for a longer rear suspension stroke and better turning compared to its predecessor.

To improve handling at the front Kawasaki have utilised a new steering stem so that it has lower rigidity which gives a smooth action and better handling.

This bike has been treated to fine-tuning throughout and when you look and sit on the bike the new refinements for the exterior are almost invisible such as a thicker front fender plastic, an extra hole in the side panel to allow additional cooling for the silencer and a new rim design for increased strength and lighter weight. Most noticeable are the footrests which are now 50mm wide.

So how do these modifications translate to performance out on the track? There's only one

way to find out...

To be honest I forgot I was testing the bike when I first went onto the track – I hadn't ridden for a couple of weeks, the track was just how I like it and I got carried away with the moment. So what does that tell you? Well, consider for a moment that I'd just jumped on a brand new bike which I hadn't ridden before and was knocking out some quick laps without giving it any thought – that's pretty much proof that right from the off the bike has a great feeling to it.

There's a very comfortable riding position with the relationship between the handlebars, seat height and footrests well spaced and just about spot on. The handlebar clamps are adjustable for fine tuning and the controls are easy to use except I found hooking my size 11 boot under the gear lever a bit tricky. The gearbox was smooth and went into gears fine, it's just that the lever felt a little too close to the footrest for my foot!

Sitting on the bike in turns and moving around on the bike was easy to do just as with the previous models and even standing up around rutted turns and banked berms was comfortable. One of the first things that is noticeable is how light the bike feels and I don't mean in just the physical sense – it's light holding on to the handlebars, easy to turn, very comfortable and easy to control in the air. This bike gives you confidence and lets you ride fast without giving it a thought.

The rear suspension is great. If the light feel and easy turning comes from the new linkage and swingarm position then Kawasaki have got this right because out of deep soft turns, ruts, whoops, braking bumps and jumps the back end was as smooth as silk through each of these elements, definitely using the whole stroke without bottoming.

The forks were similar to most standard fork settings although I did feel that the initial >>

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part of the compression stroke was softer than most which is a nice surprise. Usually standard forks are so harsh and stiff over the braking bumps. The rest of the stroke felt plush and, like the rear, there was no bottoming.

The bike's suspension and handling inspire confidence and trust in the KXF when riding the wheels off it. It's predictable which on the one hand allows you to relax and feel safe while riding as fast as you can but on the other it loses a sharpness when turning which slightly takes away the shine from it feeling so light.

Stopping the bike is easy. The front brake has a strong, positive and powerful feel and slowed the bike down quickly and the rear brake works great with a new compound for the pads.

I totally love the motor on this bike. The KXF revs up quickly and is responsive however, having said that, the bottom-end could be stronger. I grew up on two-strokes and loved thrashing the motor at the top-end and then spent the rest of my time riding 450 four-strokes using the strong torque of the motor without going anywhere near the rev limiter. The KX250F is built to rev and it's fast.

From the mid-range the bike lights up and rips into the top-end rev range very quickly and still maintains power in the over rev – this makes the bike a lot of fun to ride and it's no wonder the big-end bearings have been given a little extra support! There were a number of times where I could leave the bike in the same gear rather than changing up and there was no immediate dip in power, perfect for entering those turns when you want to leave the throttle on that little bit longer to get you into the turn.

The track was quite heavy going and I found that I was changing gear often as the motor reached the rev limiter regularly so I guess for better conditions this bike would pull taller gearing easily.

Overall the 2010 KX250F is a great package that's worth investing in. While I thought the turning was only okay in the given conditions, the handling and suspension was superb, the motor's awesome and the bike is a lot of fun to ride.

KX250F

SPECIFICATIONS >>>

Capacity: 249cc

Bore and stroke: 77mm x 53.6mm

Transmission: Five-speed

Fuel capacity: Eight-litres

Front suspension: 47mm Showa
(315mm travel)

Rear suspension: Uni-Trak
(310mm travel)

Wheelbase: 1470mm

Ground clearance: 340mm

Seat height: 955mm

Kerb weight: 105.1kg

Ed kept his track rough for the test and the Kawasaki loved the conditions





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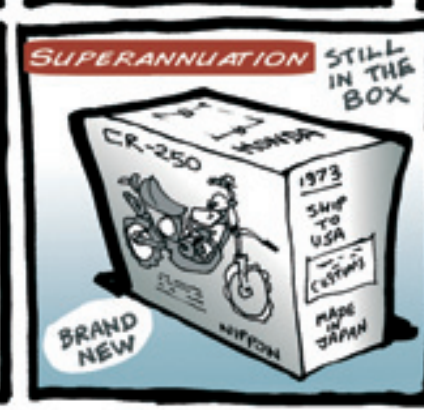
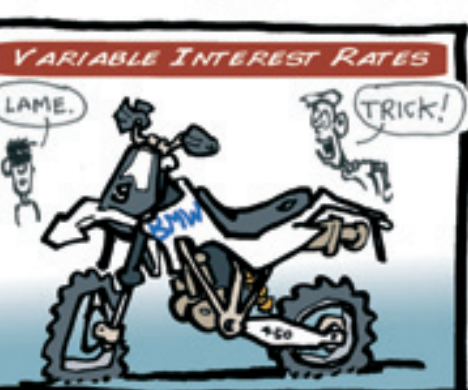
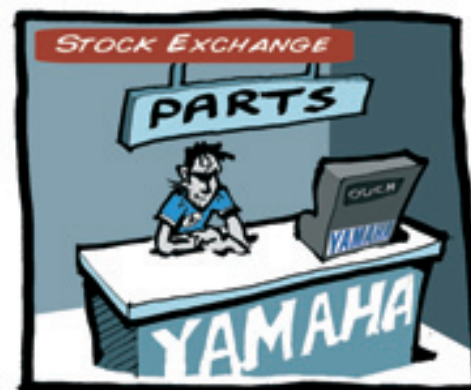
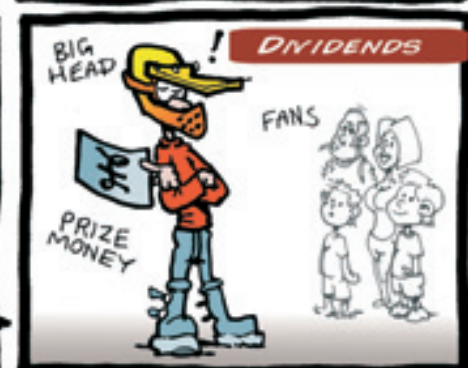
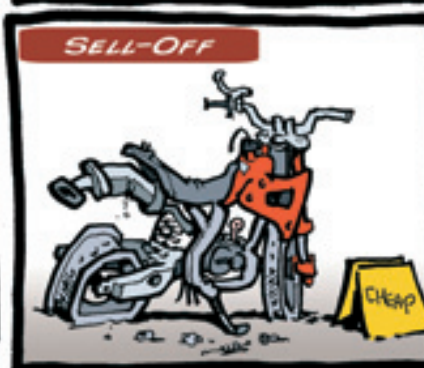
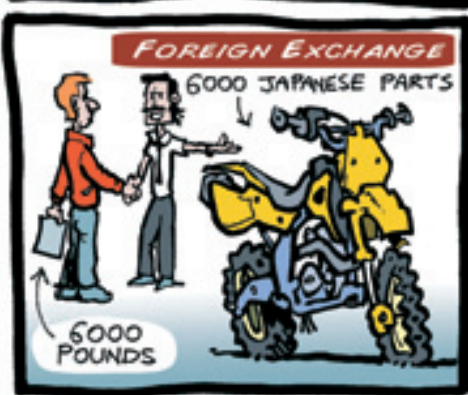
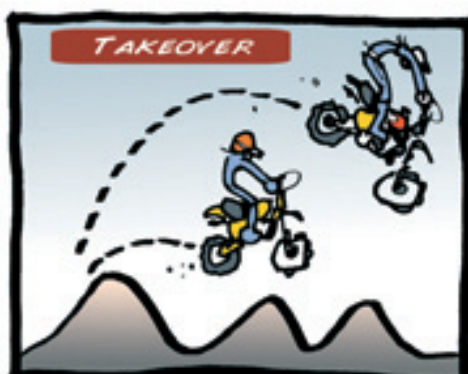
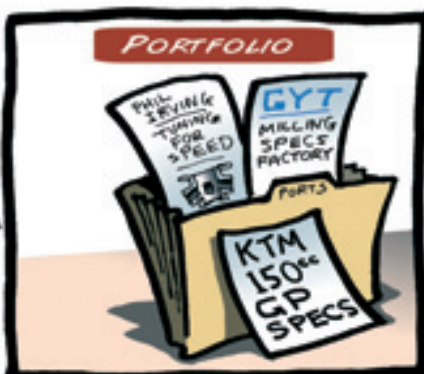
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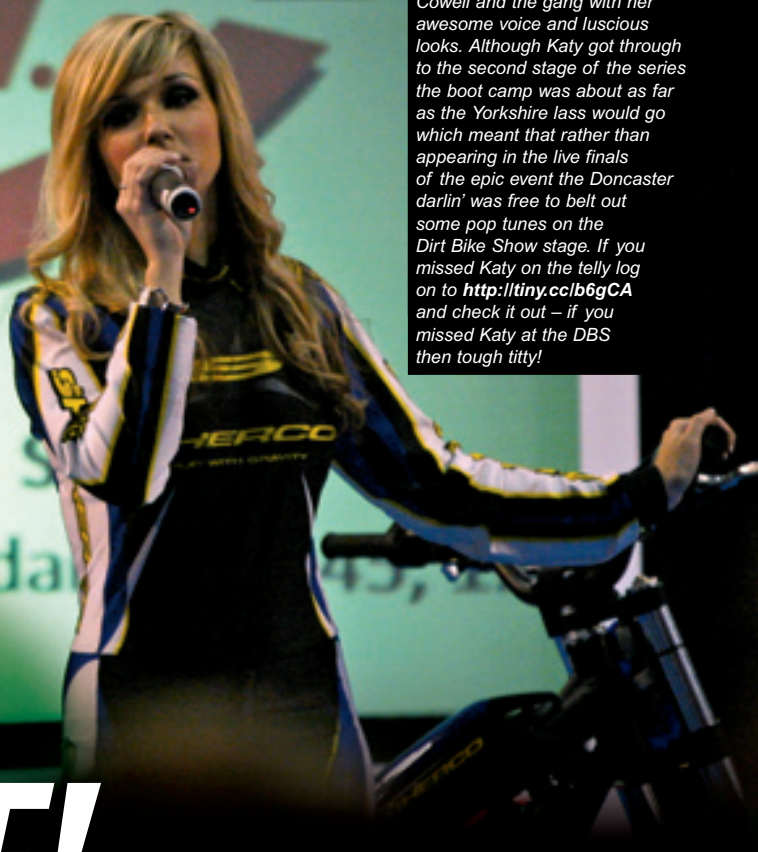
DIRT BIKE SHOW.

2009

5-8 November
Stoneleigh Park

KATY BULLOCK

Fans of hit ITV show the X-Factor will no doubt recognise Katy Bullock from her early appearance in the current series as she initially wowed Simon Cowell and the gang with her awesome voice and luscious looks. Although Katy got through to the second stage of the series the boot camp was about as far as the Yorkshire lass would go which meant that rather than appearing in the live finals of the epic event the Doncaster darlin' was free to belt out some pop tunes on the Dirt Bike Show stage. If you missed Katy on the telly log on to <http://tiny.cc/b6gCA> and check it out – if you missed Katy at the DBS then tough titty!



SHOWTIME!

WITH A PLETHORA OF DIRTY BIKES, BITS AND BABES CRAMMED INTO THE STONELEIGH EXHIBITION CENTRE IT CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING – IT'S TIME TO SHAKE YOUR FACE AT THE DIRT BIKE SHOW!

Words and stuff by Sutti

“A reet good day out,” is how one happy show goer describes the 10th edition of the Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh as he leaves under the hefty weight of three packed plastic carrier bags, a Leatt-Brace, one helmet box, two rear tyres, a stack of stickers and a 2010 DBR/TMX calendar (that's available now for just £9.99 by calling 01524 834066).

And he isn't the only happy visitor either as over the four-day weekend a whopping 21,000 of you all make it to

Europe's #1 off-road motorcycle exhibition that's held annually each autumn right here in the UK.

As always there's plenty to see and | do with three packed out halls full of motocross, enduro and trials goodness that includes new bikes, new gear, star riders and so on. Plus there's all the goings on in the Live Action arena, regular fashion shows and a whole heap of other oddities –including the DBR PS3 challenge – on the main stage so all in all it's a buzzing weekend...



TROY LEE DESIGNS

Ruling the roost at CI Sport's centre piece was the all-new for '10 Troy Lee Designs range featuring helmets, racewear and some seriously pimpin' protective bits and bobs. Another cool Troy Lee Designs product in the pipeline to look out for are the new 'Day in the Dirt' Skullcandy headphones.



Rick Wilkinson is a clear shaky face winner



dirt bike show



GRAF-FIX

If bespoke custom graphics are your thing then Sadie and the Stoke-based sticker ticklers Graf-Fix were the peeps to see as they had a fantastic pair on display – this Scotty 'too hotty' Columb replica Relentless Suzuki and an uber-trick KXF.

FLY RACING

As well as pushing a plethora of piping hot products including the sumptuous Ipone Oils range, Race FX – who celebrated their sixth birthday in August – also had this all-new FLY Racing racewear on display.

THOR

Madison pulled out all the stops to display THOR's 2010 racewear range by hiring both the Jonas Brothers and Hansen bands to model the new kit throughout the week. Although they looked as wooden and stiff as always the boys did a sterling job of showing off the latest threads from the Torsten Hallman Original Racewear range which is available in a dirt bike shop near you right now...



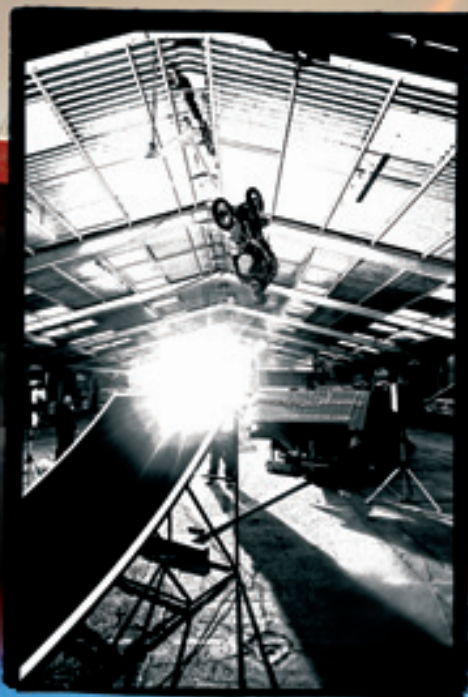
Justin Reid – pertly pretty in pink...



Dishy Debs and sexy Stevie Mills

FRO PARTY!

As the only sales display on site that had it's own bar the Fro Systems stand was where the hardcore party people – including quad racer Justin Reid, entrepreneur Stevie Mills, the hard-working Harrison clan and the DBR/T+MX management team (Lawless, Stuchbury and Hodgkinson) – hung out. Following Friday night's bottle draining get-together more than a few frolickers had a hangover from hell the next day!



LIVE ACTION ARENA

High flying minibike action and a Kickstart style trials demo made a visit to the Live Action Arena well worthwhile as James Dabill, Michael Brown, Jonathan Richardson, Dan Clark and the Bolddog boys literally put on a barnstormer of a show.



CCM RACING

One of the factory bikes on display was this CCM CMX450 that Stephen Sword will contest the 2010 MX1 world championship on. One small change to be made before the season starts is the race number – Swordy will be running #71 both at home and abroad.



UFO

Sammy Doble and the MD Racing crew are perennial attendees at the DBS and this year mixed things up with hot off the sewing machine UFO racewear and a 28-year-old Maico. As a point of interest we carbon-dated Cassie and found her age to be somewhere between the two...

OLD IRON

One of the first things you'd see when entering this year's Dirt Bike Show was actually one of the oldest too – this rather splendid Bultaco trials iron complete with a dressed up dummy in period gear! If you're wondering why this machine and kit would be plonked on the otherwise bang-on-trend Apico stand then wonder no more because the owner of the Apico empire – Yrjö Vesterinen – is actually a three-time world trials champion and this here weapon is his very first world championship winning bike from the 1976 season and the kit is from '77 when he successfully defended his crown for the very first time.

TEAM PROPPA DOT COM

Gremlins in the DBR camera equipment meant I didn't get a usable image of the all-new Proppa.com team bikes that James Noble and Nez Parker will be riding in anger throughout 2010 so here's a picture of team boss Steve Turner holding a plate of cup cakes instead – that's good ole northern hospitality for you right there folks!





SIXSIXONE

Looking suspiciously like a THOR Sentinel chest protector moulded to a Leatt-Brace the all-new 661 Droid is made from injection molded polycarbonate for max roost protection while its 'EZ-entry' neck halo provides support from hyperextension. Available in white or black, expect to see a lot of these Droids at your local track next year.



RHL ACTIVITIES

Gareth Hockey's masterplan of finding a new and permanent home for the British MX GP stepped closer to reality as he unveiled plans for a brand spanking 140-acre motorsports facility on the outskirts of Newport in South Wales. The facility will eventually include three motocross practice tracks, a six-mile enduro course, speedway oval, supermoto/kart Tarmac track, watersports facility (giggity) and an exhibition theatre and hotel.



DBR

This sexy little orange model had show goers flocking to the DBR stand for the full duration of the four-day bash. Originally ridden hard by Scotsman Stephen Sword this 125cc KTM is the actual machine that helped him win the 2002 British championship.



FOX RACING

DBR's very own Super Hans and Fox's 2010 range look equally fierce in this photo – good work team!

Shaky Jeff Perrett – or is it Sloth from The Goonies?

FRO SYSTEMS

Ever wondered what it's like to be a Fro Systems key ring just waiting to be picked up and paid for by a new owner? Nah, neither have we...



Shaky Stefan Simpson Shaky Gordon Crockard



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The long awaited first Race Spec shop has finally opened its doors, located at their mail order warehouse in Tewkesbury. The new destination super store has been designed to provide somewhere you can go to see, touch, feel and try on the products you want before you buy. Whilst Race Spec is primarily a mail order company, the decision to open a shop was based on customer demands. They wanted to come and buy at Race Spec not just on line. It also makes Race Spec more than just an internet shop, somewhere you can talk off road, to staff who all ride and have years of experience and knowledge. Boss Dave Watson said 'The whole Race Spec team are really excited about our new shop and enjoy meeting and dealing with our customers. It has helped us to get back to our roots and has given the company a whole new face and character'.



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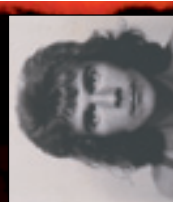
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JT 'BAD BOY' RON
'MACHINE' LECHION
BECOMES YOUNGEST-
EVER 250 GP WINNER
IN 1984 US ROUND,
AGED 17.





was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he



WINNER LECHIEN
ATTACKS ALAN KING

TOP DOGGER!

FAST, FLASH AND ULTIMATELY DOOMED TO BURN OUT AT AN EARLY AGE, RON 'DOGGER' LECHIEN WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE YOUNGEST EVER WINNER OF A 250GP...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

When he crossed the lined at Teutschenthal in July, German phenomenon Ken Roczen became the youngest ever grand prix winner. At just 15 years and 53 days he eclipsed previous record holder (and 1986 125 world champion) Dutchman Davey Strijbos who was 16 years and 172 days old when he first won a GP – also in his native country – in 1984. Third on the all-time list is Frenchman Sebastian Tortelli who was 19 days short of his 17th birthday when he won the Indonesian 125 GP in 1995! So these are all 125 and MX2 milestones. But what of the premier classes?

The 250 GP mark was set by a fast, stylish young Yank, making his grand prix debut at Unadilla Valley Raceway in 1984. The annual Trans-Atlantic crossing always came at a crucial moment for the European contingent. Their championship table often delicately poised, a good or bad day at New York's thick, lumpy loam valley could seriously alter the title's ultimate outcome. And an assortment of America's best waited to inflict defeat around a fearful track they knew and loved from the AMA national calendar.

This time, Suzuki's former 125 MX and 250 SX champion Mark 'Bomber' Barnett from Illinois lined up alongside Honda duo Bob 'Hurricane' Hannah and Ron 'Dogger' Lechien. A 27-year-old '70s hero from Idaho, Hannah hadn't won a National title since his serious water skiing accident in 1980 and had recently broken his left wrist. But Hannah loved Unadilla with a passion. Six days before the US 250 GP he hacked off his plaster cast in readiness for action!

Lean and long-limbed, 17-year-old Lechien hailed from the motocross hotbed of San Diego, Southern California, where his dad owned Maxima Oils. Ron had burst out of the amateur ranks to become 1983 125 AMA Rookie of the Year, was snapped up by Honda, had already won a supercross Main Event and would take the 1984 250 Nationals down to a last-round epic against Rick Johnson's Yamaha, losing by only eight points.

Englishman Jem Whatley (Heron Suzuki) arrived for his American debut second in the world championship, 31 points behind Heinz Kinigadner (KTM) and 29 ahead of Belgian Marc Velkeneers (Gilera). But Whatley and Unadilla didn't gel. Each year promoter Ward Robinson would grade everywhere except the two major, gnarly climbs and re-seed the whole lot so the circuit was buried beneath two feet of deceptively benign, glossy green grass. Whatley waited a while for the grass to "get squashed" so he could see where the hell he was going!

The works Hondas headed race one for nearly 40 thrilling minutes. Barnett, fastest in practice, charged through from a poor start, passing Honda trio Alan King, a partially fit Danny 'Magoo' Chandler and portly local hero Jo-Jo Keller, although Magoo tanked himself painfully on the fifth lap and had to quit! Frenchman Jacky Vimond challenged Keller hard until his Sonauto Yamaha broke its power valve and Jacky fell back behind Velkeneers, Keith Bowen (Yamaha) and Kinigadner. Yamaha US factory star Bowen, 36th off the start, rode a torrid race to reach that seventh place.

Whatley, lying a lacklustre 17th, was lapped by the leaders just as Barnett barrelled past the two Hondas for a brilliant win. Lechien also overwhelmed a tiring Hannah on the final lap, Bob badly blistered after his lay-off. Torn skin was cheerfully cut from the palm of Hannah's left hand with a pair of scissors between races as Whatley slumped dejectedly in the Suzuki box van. "It's that far uphill," groaned Jem. "I just can't get it sucked."

His Suzuki US team-mate – the short, stocky Barnett – offered some chilling advice. "It's a fast track. Technical but fast and demanding. You're not racing against other riders, you're racing against the track. You've got to be on the gas, full bore up these hills. You Europeans are perhaps approaching them a little too cautiously. You have to be aggressive over those bumps. Gas the first to carry you over the next two. Gas the fourth and hard again..."

Suitably inspired, Jem attacked race two with renewed >>

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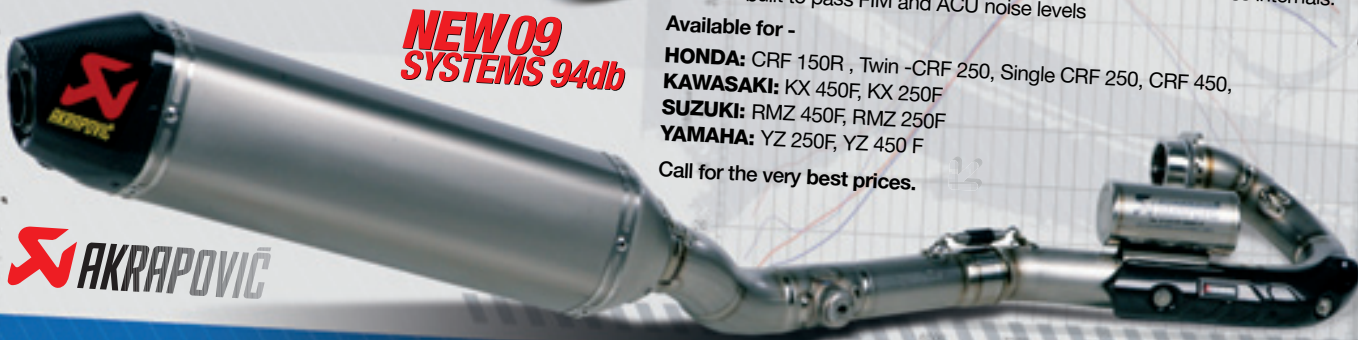
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gusto and had overcome Jacky Martens' KTM in a duel for 12th place when he jammed his ankle beneath the Suzuki's footrest and slid agonisingly downfield and out of the points behind Canadian champ Doug Hoover.

Barnett blazed to the front after overtaking early leader Keller. Hannah, Lechien and Team Tamm's Alan King also leapt past the robust local warrior before Barnett's Suzuki suddenly stopped down in the dark, marshy depths of Unadilla Valley. He jumped off the stationary bike and frantically ripped away the remnants of a broken rear brake arm. But Hannah, Lechien, King, Bowen, Keller and Velkeneers all bounded by and Barnett's only chance of a 250 GP victory (he'd won the 1981 US 125 round at Lexington, Ohio) had vanished. He fought bravely back to fifth as Hannah yielded to Lechien. But with the crowd howling their approval, the Hurricane launched a final whirlwind attack on his teenaged team-mate. Bob stormed briefly by on the penultimate lap, the Hondas surging up the frightening hill towards the last lap flag side by side before Lechien regained the initiative for a famous victory!

The elated Californian pulled up into a sea of well-wishers, media and microphones. How did he feel on winning his first grand prix? Ron shook his bewildered head. "Tired!" he grinned.

Hannah, equally triumphant at proving he still possessed the prodigious physical, mental and spiritual reserves for the fight, chided his crowd of admirers at the Honda truck. "Did you see me get past Lechien with a lap to go?" he yelped as more dead skin was snipped from the palm of that raw left hand!

And what of the Euros? Heinz Kinigadner, battered and bruised from a huge practice crash, dropped back behind Velkeneers and Vimond after a race-long duel with Marc's Giler but still extended his title lead to a healthy 45 points over the hapless Whatley. Velkeneers – joint sixth overall with Keith Bowen and top European finisher – had closed down to within 10 points of the Englishman who also now had Vimond hovering dangerously in the title table. And despite a brave Belgian GP victory at Nismes, Jem's title challenge never got properly back on track.

In Upstate New York, though, they'd all been beaten by that skinny, supreme stylist Ron Lechien. Always immaculately clad in JT gear, the gifted Honda starlet would go on to claim the 1985 125 AMA national title, win the MX des twice and the 1989 US 500 GP at Hollister Hills before burning out in his mid-twenties from drug abuse.

But he will always remain – aged 17 years and 207 days – the youngest ever winner of a 250cc motocross grand prix on that glowering, atmospheric afternoon of July 8 1984 at the 'Thrilla in F**kin' Unadilla'!

HANNAH (33) NOLESNOTS
AHEAD OF KINIGADNER (9)
KING (10), CHANDLER (18)
AND LECHIEN (34). –
BARNETT IS RIGHT BEHIND
BOB

MARC 'BOMBER'
BARNETT WINS THE
FIRST MOTS OF THE
1984 US 250 GP



THE TOUGH ONE!

A FORMER TOP 10 WTC CONTENDER, TADDY BLAZUSIAK HAS REINVENTED HIMSELF AS A CHAMPIONSHIP-WINNING EXTREME AND INDOOR ENDURO STAR – BUT IT'S NOT BEEN AN EASY JOURNEY...

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

If there's one rider that subscribes to the old adage 'the more you put in the more you get out' it's Poland's #1 enduro racer Taddy Blazusiak. Taddy's a grafter. If there was one thing he learned from his years trying to reach the top of the World Trials Championship it was this – talent gets you so far, hard work gets you a whole lot further.

Hard work is something Taddy's never shied away from. Learning from those better than him at the feet-up game that practice makes perfect, when he was offered the chance to switch from trials to extreme and indoor enduro competition he knew exactly what was needed – days, weeks and months of little else but riding. Enduro riding, not trials. Get it right in practice and his chances of getting it right in competition would be a whole lot better.

Taddy's indoor and extreme enduro career has been many things. Short – he only switched away from trials full-time a few years ago. Successful – he's a three-time Erzberg winner already. Turbulent – among the highs of success has been one very painful low. "Smashing my eye socket was something that made me really think about everything I was doing," explains Taddy. "You have so many emotions when you have a serious accident but I always knew that I'd come back to racing."

It goes without saying that a serious facial injury never comes at a good time but when Taddy smashed his face against the crossbar of his factory KTM prior to the second round of the '08 US endurocross series it came just when he was starting to hunt down championship-winning success.

It's no secret that Blazusiak had to undergo surgery to rebuild the damage he did to his face. And it's no secret that thanks to his hard-charging style many weren't surprised that his luck had run out and that he'd paid the price for his 'wild riding'.

"My goal for '08 was to win the US endurocross championship. I'd worked hard pre-season and after winning the opening round in Las Vegas I knew I was heading in the right direction with things. People forget that I'd never done any motocross or supercross before the end of '07. I won Erzberg which was great but you don't need motocross skills there.

"As well as being able to deal with the rocks and logs at an indoor enduro you have to be a good starter, be able to jump and be fast in the corners. I'd never done any of that. I'd always done trials."

Despite his lack of motocross experience Taddy was getting results and was obviously only going to improve. Whether he could have won the '08 US endurocross championship no-one will ever know. Sure, he won the opening round but, well, that's not the same as winning the championship is it?

>>

Jumps, starts, carrying corner speed – it's been a steep learning curve for the former trials star

© Lukas Nazdraczev/Red Bull Photofiles



Taddy's injuries understandably took a lot out of him. At a time when he'd hoped to be extending his championship lead he was having small pieces of metal screwed to the front of his skull. While laid up in hospital it seemed that '08 was going to be one of those best-forgotten years.

Taddy's injuries would have made most riders think long and hard about whether they'd be willing to get back on a bike and start racing again. But for Taddy there was no questioning his want to get back into competition. "You can think about it, think about it some more and come up with a million different conclusions. I know I was lucky. I know that it could have been a lot more serious. But I never thought about quitting."

Missing two rounds of the endurocross championship meant his hopes of claiming the title were never going to materialise. But Taddy did claim one major success – he won the Erzberg Rodeo for the second time.

"Erzberg was the race that put me on the map in '07 so it was nice to go back there after my injury and win again. It was weird because no-one knew who I was the first year but it was very different the second time around. There was a lot of pressure on me to win."

Winning Erzberg showed that Taddy was on his way back. And strong performances in the remaining Endurocross rounds – including a win at round four – further showed the KTM rider was steadily regaining his form. But Taddy still had a lot to learn and numerous areas of his game where improvements could – and needed – to be made.

The winter '08/'09 Indoor Enduro World Cup series was a reminder of just how much more work he had to do. "I was competitive. My fitness was coming back. But Ivan Cervantes was stronger than me during the championship. It was hard because I knew I could beat him but I still needed more time on my bike, time to be fully fit and race ready."

No matter how much Taddy wanted to be winning it was clear that it wasn't going to happen. Not with Cervantes riding so well and never putting a foot wrong. For a rider that wanted to be fighting for top honours not being able to due to being on the injury comeback trail was a bitter pill to swallow for Taddy. But he did what he could, got the best results he could and finished the championship as runner-up.

Coming off the IEWC series a much fitter, stronger rider than when he started it, Taddy's goal was again to win the US endurocross championship. "It was weird because 12 months had passed since I thought I was ready to try and win the title and I was starting over again. I'd worked hard after the European races and was pretty confident I was back to full fitness. But until you start racing you never know."

Taddy won the opening round of the series, just as he had 12 months ago. But instead of then crashing out of the title race he maintained his form and after numerous further wins picked up his first major US title.

"It's taken me one year more than I hoped it would but to finally win the endurocross championship has been great. I knew before the series started that I was back to my best but you don't know if

On his way to three wins at Sheffield in the opening round of this year's IEWC



the other riders have improved or not."

One thing Taddy is today, aside from being more experienced, is a little more controlled. "I guess I was pretty wild at times and maybe I still am in some situations but I'm making less mistakes during my races now. I would be fast but make mistakes, now I'm trying to smooth things out."

Overcoming his facial injury, Taddy has emerged a better, more complete, rider. He's learned that a throttle works both ways – although he still prefers hard riding to a more softly, softly approach. He now has a major indoor title to his name to go with his Erzberg successes – although he missed out on a major payday in Sin City...

After winning the opening two rounds of the Endurocross Geico Triple Crown, a win at the final in Vegas would have seen him add a healthy 50K bonus to the title he secured at the penultimate round. But it didn't happen. "The title was always the thing that I was after but knowing that the money could have been mine, it's disappointing to have lost it."

And with an aggressive pass by his pre-championship rival Ricky Dietrich not only stopping him from collecting his Vegas payday but also injuring his knee, Taddy's participation in the Indoor Enduro World Cup is uncertain. "The fact that everything went so well at the opening race in Sheffield makes it even more disappointing. Losing the money's one thing but getting injured is even worse."

Whether Taddy makes it to the second round of the IEWC series and can go one better than he did last year and win the title now remains to be seen. But if he is able to compete – and can perform like he did at the opening round in Sheffield – there aren't too many riders that will likely challenge him.

"Sheffield was great. To come back to Europe after winning the endurocross championship and win all three finals was the perfect start to the championship. I've had to work hard to come back and it took almost a year. But in Sheffield I showed that I've come back stronger and better. I just hope that my knee injury isn't too bad and I'm able to try and win the world cup title."



© Lukas Nazdraczev/Red Bull Photos



A smashed eye-socket earlier in the season meant Taddy wasn't totally up to speed by the time last year's IEWC series rolled around

IRON AWE!

TADDY'S ERZBERG HAT-TRICK >>

Winning the gruelling Erzberg Rodeo up the infamous Iron Giant in Austria is something only a handful of riders in the world are capable of. Taddy's now managed it three years running.

"It's a very special race for me. Anyone that has been to Erzberg knows that there's no race like it in the world. I've been lucky to win three times but it's never been easy. The first year was amazing. I wasn't even going to race so to win the event was a massive surprise. It's the race that started my career as an enduro rider.

"The second year was harder. People knew who I was. I knew I could win. And I was expected to win. You have to have good luck at Erzberg and things went well again for me. This year's race was the hardest. I was sick before the race, it was seriously hot and then I got a bad start.

"Who knows what the next three years will be like. I'm going to try and keep winning but it's such a hard race. I'm surprised that I've not had any real bad luck already. It's so easy to damage your bike because the whole place is covered in rocks.



Taddy won The Tough One for the first time in 2009

*Ivan Cervantes gets
the defence of his title
off to a faltering start*

BLAST OFF!

THE INDOOR ENDURO WORLD CUP KICKS OFF IN SHEFFIELD
WITH THREE WINS FOR TADDY 'THE DADDY' BLAZUSIAK...

Words and photos by Sully





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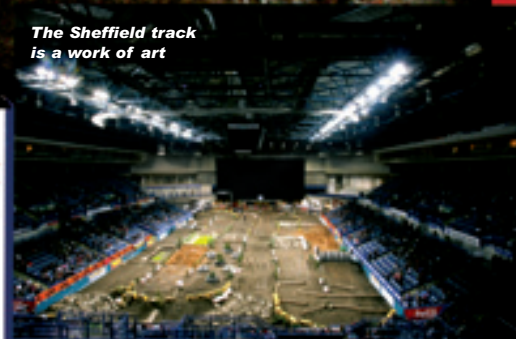
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Dougie Lampkin washes out in the first turn of race three

The Sheffield track is a work of art



Knighter's evening ends early with breathing difficulties



The industrial heartland of South Yorkshire is the last place you'd expect to find a motorsports facility that's capable of hosting every single type of off-road motorcycle sport going but believe it or not there's one right there between the Meadowhall shopping centre and the Don Valley Bowl.

In the past 15 years the ice hockey rink-sized floorspace of the Sheffield Arena has seen trials, motocross, supermoto, minibike and FMX action and now thanks to the good folk at Future West indoor enduro too.

The Sheffield race is the opening round of the Indoor Enduro World Cup – a championship won last year by Spanish superstar Ivan Cervantes. While Crazy Ivan is back to defend his crown the real favourite to take this year's title is KTM's Taddy Blazusiak. Taddy's the daddy when it comes to indoor enduro and the recently crowned 2009 AMA endurocross champion is super cocky in Sheffield – especially after he sets fastest time in qualifying by a massive four seconds!

Aside from giving Taddy first pick of the startgate for his heat race, setting the fastest lap reaps no real benefits especially as certain sections of the Dirtwux-built circuit are lottery-esque at best meaning the win's right up for grabs until the chequered flag's unfurled. With rock, log, tyre and sand sections plus a fluoro-green water hazard the course for Britain's second ever indoor endurocross race is a corker and a real tester for the assembled athletes – a third of which are British.

Of the locals it's Dougie Lampkin and David Knight who are most popular with the crowd as

they're introduced during the opening ceremonies but both are hiding illness – Dougie has a migraine and Knighter a throat infection – and will be performing below their best. But despite not feeling 100 per cent both easily transfer from their qualifiers to make it to the Main Event along with homies Graham Jarvis, Tom Sagar and the king of comebacks Gordon 'whataboutye' Crockard. Crockard's path to the final is undoubtedly helped by his ability to nail a killer holeshot in his heat race but with a poor pick to the startline for the finals good gates will be a thing of the past...

Despite giving 100 per cent effort the Ulsterman gets off to a shocker in the first of the three point-paying finals but it's another veteran who yanks the holey – Mike Brown. Following a stellar career in MX and SX the 37-year-old is now embarking in a new career of off-road racing and the recently crowned WORCS champion proves there's still life in the old dog yet by running in front of the pack for the opening few laps.

Blazusiak soon hunts him down though while Antoine Meo and Knighter both push him hard too. As the laps wind down Taddy makes a move for the lead with Meo also finding a way past Brown but Knighter runs out of time – and oxygen – and has to settle for fourth.

"Beforehand I just thought I had a cold but I just couldn't breathe during the last two laps of that first final," says Knighter later. "I had a similar problem a few years back but tests didn't show that there was anything wrong with me. I'm going to get it checked out and see what the doctors say. It's not every day a round of the Indoor World Enduro Championship comes to the UK which makes not being able to race >>>



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The versatile Mike Brown finishes second...



...and Grimbo bags a mega third

RESULTS

1	Taddy Blazusiak	KTM	15+15+15=45
2	Mike Brown	KTM	10+10+12=32
3	Graham Jarvis	Sherco	5+12+8=25
4	Ivan Cervantes	KTM	6+6+10=22
5	Antoine Meo	Husqvarna	12+4+4=20
6	Joakim Lunggren	Husaberg	4+8+6=18
7	David Knight	Kawasaki	8+0+0=8
8	Dougie Lampkin	Beta	1+5+2=8
11	Gordon Crockard	KTM	0+0+5=5
12	Tom Sagar	Suzuki	0+1+0=1



Taddy Blazusiak notches up an unbeaten three from three

twice as disappointing."

Knighter's done for the evening but the British fans still have plenty to cheer for as Sherco's Graham Jarvis snatches the runner-up spot in the second final behind that man Taddy. Brown takes his second third of the night while Husaberg's super-Swede Joakim Lunggren beats Cervantes and Lampkin across the line for fourth spot as Meo slips to seventh.

After a less than stellar evening so far Dougie's night gets even worse when he washes out in the first turn of the third final and gets crunched from behind. Tough as owt the Silsden scrapper remounts his bent-up Beta bus and takes chase after the pack that's lead by Brownie, Blazusiak and Cervantes as they make it a KTM 1-2-3. Jarvis battles to fourth ahead of Lunggren

and Crockard who finishes in the points for the first time all night with a sweet sixth place.

So it's Taddy who takes the overall win with maximum points ahead of Brown and Jarvis. "Winning the opening round of the Indoor Enduro World Cup is really great – I couldn't have asked for things to go any better. I got the fastest time in qualifying, won my heat race and then had three great starts in the finals and won all three races.

"The first two went really well. I made a few small mistakes but I think it was impossible not to because there were a few tricky places on the track. In the third race I was third and decided just to take it easy. Then the guys ahead of me made some mistakes and I was able to win again which was a great end to a great night."

FIVE MINUTES WITH...

FUTURE WEST'S JOHN HELLAM >>>

DBR: What was the thinking behind bringing a round of the IEWC to the UK?

JH: "Sheffield Arena is a great venue and one we are very familiar with after staging 16 successful events over the past 13 years. We are hardcore supercross promoters but have noticed that a lot of big name MX/SX stars are getting involved with endurocross on both sides of the Atlantic.

"From a personal and business point of view we are just as keen to get involved and push the sport forward. We have 18 years of experience in indoor events and have all of the equipment and infrastructure in place. We have a good relationship with all the major venues in the country who have confidence in our ability to produce a professional show of this kind. It's a natural progression and expansion of our interests on all levels."

DBR: What were the added difficulties of promoting an enduro event instead of supercross?

JH: "It was all a bit daunting at first. The big questions we needed to answer were where do you find logs, rocks, large earthmover tyres and the specialised equipment to handle all the materials? How do you go about building and removing a pool indoors, not to mention the shrubs and foliage to make the place look the part?

"Dealing with the FIM at this level was also a first for our company but all went as planned. It turned out that we have more materials and equipment contacts than we realised – we have good experienced people working with us which made things easy with the FIM requirements and the general smooth running of the event."

DBR: In your opinion how did the evening go?

JH: "Going by all of the comments so far it was a hit with the spectators and the off-road community in general."

DBR: In view of the lower number of rider entries compared to a supercross event and the added expenses with the track build etc was this event a commercial success?

JH: "The entries in the EX1 far exceeded our expectations with 11 nations represented and all of the world's top riders in attendance. The British classes with the exception of the Trials class were what we had expected for a first-time event. Commercially the event needs more spectators, I am convinced this will happen at future events now that people have a better understanding of the event and the positive feedback."

DBR: Will we be seeing another IEWC round in 2010?

JH: "My focus at the moment is the British SX championship but yes we do intend to stage another Indoor Enduro World Cup in the UK and possibly elsewhere. We have an exclusive option for the UK. We will need to secure some sponsors but the success of this year's event should help with that side of things."



Antoine Meo starts strongly but can't keep it going

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SUTTY SELECTS 13 OF THE LATEST DVDS TO HIT THE
SHELVES OF HIS LOCAL 'SPECIALIST' STORE AND REVIEWS
'EM IN A RUGGED NORTHERN MAN STYLEE...

Words and photo by **Sutty**



After watching the Nitro Circus TV series on MTV for the past few weeks I feared that the new Nitro Circus DVD – Country Fried – would be a little watered down when it came to moto content but thankfully I was way off the mark because this movie delivers way more motocross madness than its predecessors and a bunch more belly laughs too. Country Fried features top riders including Travis Pastrana, Taddy Blazusiak, Chad Reed, Ronnie Renner and a whole heap more full-throttle stars who live their life behind bars and the action comes thick and fast all the way through. Do you need this DVD in your life? Probably not. Do you want it? Yes you do...

dirtbikerider 77



BAR-TO-BAR 2009

The 2009 AMA supercross championship featured a season-long battle between Chad Reed and James Stewart that got a little heated at times and was without doubt one of the most exciting in the history of the sport. This DVD puts you in the premier position to witness every inch of the war and will have you on the edge of your seats as their fight unfolds throughout the 17-round season.

As well as all the action in the 450 class this 2-DVD set has Lites action and other bonus features such as highlights from the press conferences plus in-depth Chad Reed and James Stewart features. All in all Bar-to-Bar 2009 is the definitive DVD that documents the world's #1 supercross series better than ever before.

One small gripe and that's the fact that there's no footage from the Daytona round and no explanation as to why there's not either – that fact aside this is a very enjoyable DVD.

Rating: 9/10

Supplier: dirtbikebitz.com

TRIAL DES NATIONS 2009

This DVD offers a comprehensive review of the 2009 Trial des Nations that was dominated by the Spanish men while the British female team – Becky Cook, Emma Bristow and Joanna Coles – kicked ass to take a well deserved victory. Shorter than most of the other DVDs at only 51 minutes it's still able to offer a great overview of this fantastic event held this year in Darfo Boario Terme, Italy.

Rating: 6/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com



WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP 2009

I've never been to a WEC event and unless they hold another one in Britain then I probably never will but I have to admit that as a TV fan I love them like crazy. While GP motocross has been sanitised somewhat by all the grooming of tracks the WEC is still all about just getting down and doing it in the dirt no matter what the conditions – dust, mud, rocks, rivers, snow, so on and so forth.

And that's why this DVD does it for me because although I don't care so much about who finished fourth in day two of round three of the WEC I do absolutely adore the fact that every 30 seconds or so I see some riding action that will either scare or excite me. If you want to see some of the world's best riders pushing the limits in a real off-road environment then you really must see this DVD.

Rating: 8/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

MAXXIS BRITISH MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP 2009

With over four hours of bar-to-bar racing action there's a lot to digest in this DVD which can make it hard to get through in one sitting but if you're a big fan of the Maxxis British Motocross Championship then I can guarantee you're gonna be a big fan of this DVD.

Highlights include Brad Anderson taking home the bacon in MX1, the early season battles of Sword and Simpson and Billy Mac's get off at Langrish – ouch!

Rating: 6.5/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com



MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS 2009

The 2009 Red Bull Motocross des Nations was one of the greatest battles in motocross history as the Italian Franciacorta circuit hosted the ultimate team toe-to-toe tear up for countries from around the world. But this race wasn't just about team glory as the freshly crowned world and AMA MX1 motocross champions scrapped it out in the day's opening moto to try and settle that old score of where the world's fastest motocross racer comes from – the European GP series or the USA Nationals.

Featuring some awesome on-track battles, high flying action and some of the most disturbing crashes ever caught on camera – look out for Michael Byrne eating **** in moto two – this 52-minute DVD does its darndest to deliver all the highs and lows of the world cup of motocross where Team America take their 20th stunning victory.

Rating: 7/10

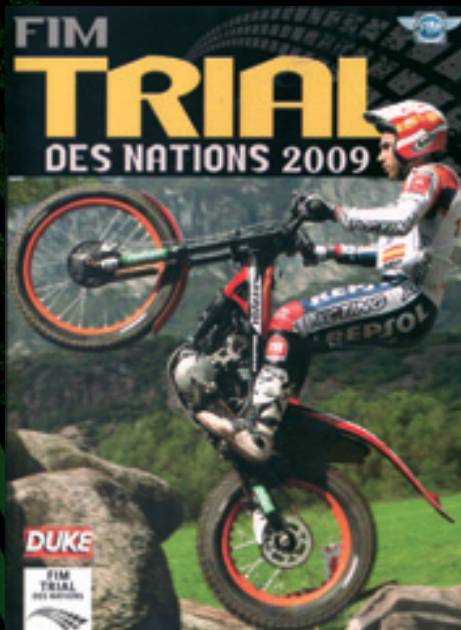
Supplier: dukevideo.com

MX09

Almost six hours of action-packed footage from the 2009 MXGP season hosted by Paul Malin whose solid commentary skills and insightful guides to each GP circuit make this DVD a must-see for all fans of world championship motocross. Well edited using footage from every single moto of the year including on-bike cameras, if it happened at a GP and was captured by the Youthstream TV crew then you can guarantee it's on this DVD.

Rating: 7/10

Supplier: dirtbikebitz.com





AMA MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW 2009

Although the GPs are undoubtedly the world's premier outdoor motocross championship there's still something very magical about the AMA outdoor nationals – especially the East Coast races where they have grass and other natural goodness next to the brown stuff – because the presentation of the race track with flags, bunting and banners is bang on and the track prep out of this world.

This 465-minute DVD chronicles the entire series from round one at Glen Helen right through to the season finale in Steel City and it includes all the highs and lows of this momentous season. Highlights for me are watching the contrast in riding styles between the super-technical Frenchman Christophe Pourcel and the balls out nippers Justin Barcia and Trey Canard and of course the plethora of aggressive passes, crashes and take-out moves.

Rating: 8/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

TRIAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2009

Toni Bou and Adam Raga battle it out until the last round in this feet-up epic that shows action from all eight stops in the 2009 championship tour. With enlightening commentary from Jack Burnicle and awesome riding skills shown by all the series' leading contenders this three-and-three-quarter hour production is a must-have for all trials fans.

Rating: 6/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com



THE TOUGH ONE

Extreme enduro fan Jeff Pakosta pulls out all the stops once again to bring us – the viewer – an awesome documentary about one of the world's toughest off-road races. This time it's the 2009 Tough One that gets the Throttle Entertainment treatment with this DVD giving a great insight into what this event – that's the brainchild of total sadist Stevie Ireland – is all about.

As well as starring the sport's leading riders – David Knight, Wayne Braybrook, Tom Sagar, Taddy Blazusiak, Paul Eddy and more – this film also features interviews with some industry experts including our beloved editor which makes it worth way more than the price of purchase in itself. Overall it's well shot, well edited and well worthy of becoming a part of your DVD collection.

Rating: 8/10

Supplier: throttleentertainment.com

EPIC

This movie is best described as being beautiful – it's beautifully shot, has a beautiful soundtrack and is made by beautiful people. Featuring some of the best motocross riders to turn their wheels in American soil as well as some young up and coming talent, EPIC celebrates the sport of motocross and the athletes who make it what it is. Starring top riders such as Andrew Short, Nico Izzi, Max Anstie, Adam Cianciarulo, Trey Canard, Jason Anderson and many more you'll end up watching this movie time and time again and I can guarantee that it'll never disappoint...

Rating: 9/10

Supplier: vurbmoto.com



X-FIGHTERS 2009

After watching way too much sub-standard footage from the X-Fighters on Dave over the year I didn't have great hopes of being entertained when I sat down to watch this DVD. But within minutes of slotting it into the player I realised that I was onto a winner as this movie seriously kicks some ass even though it's narrated by a cheesy American voiceover guy.

In some ways though he helps make this movie great as this isn't just an out and out review of the X-Fighters season but more of a documentary that highlights the best bits from each of the five stops plus has a whole heap of extras including a 3D tricktionary and behind the scenes interviews and footage that's guaranteed to blow your mind!

Starring Robbie Maddison, Eigo Sato, Mat Rebeaud, Levi Sherwood, Jeremy Stenberg and more this is the best purely FMX DVD to hit the shelves in recent years.

Rating: 9.5/10

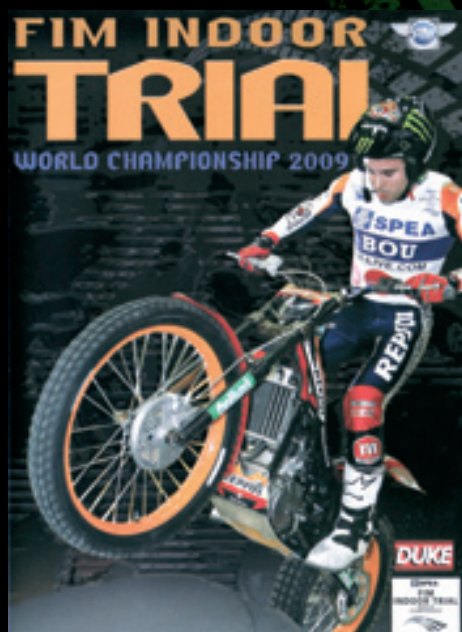
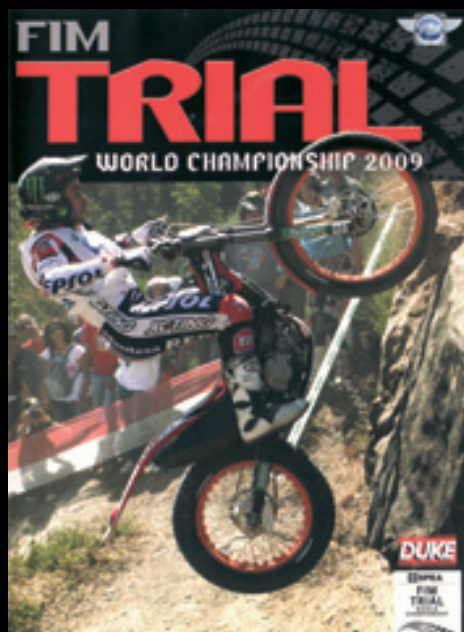
Supplier: dukevideo.com

WORLD INDOOR TRIAL 2009

Although commentator Jack Burnicle tries his very best to inject a little excitement into this DVD it still falls a bit flat. The action's filmed well enough and there's plenty of it but I just find that indoor trials looks a whole lot more impressive live so I'd recommend that unless you're a true trials fan who just has to get every DVD that's available then your money would be better spent on a Sheffield Indoor ticket instead.

Rating: 5/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com





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Josh Grant remains the lead guy
at Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha





Chad Reed's going to have to fight it out with Ryan Villopoto to be the main man on the Monster Energy Kawasaki team

CRUNCHTIME!

FEWER DOLLARS MEANS FEWER SPOTS AND FEWER SPOTS MEANS MORE RIDERS LEFT WITHOUT RIDES IN 2010. FORMER NATIONAL CHAMPIONS ARE LEFT WITHOUT FACTORY DEALS WHILE A COUPLE OF YOUNGSTERS GET A SECOND CHANCE. THIS IS THE 2010 AMA SX SERIES...

It's easier to talk about what hasn't changed for 2010 so we'll start there. Defending AMA Supercross champion James Stewart is still the lead guy at L&M Yamaha and he'll be running the #1 plate. Josh Grant is still the lead guy at Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha and he'll still be #33 which is his new permanent number under the current system. Ryan Villopoto is still at Monster Energy Kawasaki, although his status as the clear number one guy isn't quite so cut-and-dry anymore. Andrew Short and Davi Millsaps are still at Honda Red Bull Racing. Kevin Windham is still at GEICO Powersports Honda. Ryan Dungey is still at factory Suzuki...

This may all seem very much like non-news but that's only half the story. At L&M, Stewart is joined by 20-year-old Josh Hill who had a tough year in 2009 after winning an AMA SX round in 2008. Considering the state of the economy this may be Hill's last chance to prove himself but he's well aware of that and is using it as motivation.

Over at Monster Energy Kawasaki, Villopoto is joined by friendly rival Chad Reed. While the two both won AMA Supercross rounds last year, Reed has definitely proven himself to be perhaps the most consistent supercross racer in the history of the sport so Villopoto – at least indoors – is going to have his hands full being the top guy in the truck. Ironically, outdoors will be easier for Villopoto even though Reed is the defending champ.

At JGR, Grant is joined by Justin Brayton who has proven himself to be a top 450cc talent but keeps getting stuck on 250cc machines. Well, that's a problem no longer...

Windham reportedly signed for no salary – or very nearly no salary – for 2010 after Ivan Tedesco nearly took his ride for a very low price tag. Instead, Tedesco will be heading to the Valli Motorsports Yamaha squad alongside young Kyle Regal. While it's a bit of a start-up motocross and supercross team, Valli will be utilising parts and equipment directly from the Yamaha factory since

Yamaha will not be fielding a team of their own in 2010.

Dungey is staying on the factory Suzuki but instead of running Pro Circuit parts the 2010 team will be fielded with major assistance from Yoshimura. Yoshimura did all of Suzuki's engine stuff back before Suzuki hired Ricky Carmichael but RC brought along PC as part of his deal. RC's racing in circles now so Yoshimura is back and it really makes sense logistically as the Suzuki race shop and the main Yoshimura headquarters are literally across the street from one another in my hometown of Chino, California.

Joining Dungey on the Suzuki team is Austin Stroupe in Lites SX while rumours of a second 450cc guy continue to circulate – it will likely just be Tommy Hahn but out of the Canidae outfit. The Canidae/Motosport Kawasaki team is now the Canidae/Motosport Suzuki team so Hahn will be on a factory-supported RM-Z450 while the rest of the team (most of which is yet to be official, even this late in the game) will be on RM-Z250s ♦

Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/XX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

STATESIDE

Top Aussie Michael Byrne is just one of the main players who's yet to secure a deal for 2010



Above: Dan Reardon moves up to 450s with the MCRMX team
Right: Davi Millsaps will race a factory Honda again in 2010





2010 AMA SX >> CHAMPIONSHIP

DATES AND VENUES////////////////////

Jan 9	Angel Stadium	Anaheim, CA
Jan 16	Chase Field	Phoenix, AZ
Jan 23	Angel Stadium	Anaheim, CA
Jan 30	AT&T Park	San Francisco, CA
Feb 6	Qualcomm Stadium	San Diego, CA
Feb 13	Angel Stadium	Anaheim, CA
Feb 20	Lucas Oil Stadium	Indianapolis, IN
Feb 27	Georgia Dome	Atlanta, GA
March 6	Daytona IS	Daytona, FL
March 13	Rogers Centre	Toronto, CAN
March 20	Cowboys Stadium	Houston, TX
March 27	Jacksonville MS	Jacksonville, FL
April 10	Reliant Stadium	Houston, TX
April 17	Edward Jones Dome	St Louis, MO
April 24	Qwest Stadium	Seattle, WA
May 1	Rice Eccles Field	Salt Lake City, UT
May 8	Sam Boyd Stadium	Las Vegas, NV



James Stewart is sticking with Yamaha but he'll run the #1 plate

in the Lites SX class.

Short and Millsaps should be the only two guys on the factory Honda team although rumours have even had Grant Langston filling a third spot there.

The MotoConcepts Racing team, going into its second season, has now switched from Hondas to Yamahas and now includes Southwick National winner Matt Goerke, Jeff Alessi on 250s and a man who should have been on 450s when he came to the USA – Dan Reardon. Reardon will be on 450s with the MCRMX team.

It's still not clear what's going on with Josh Hansen. Hansen, the two-time consecutive winner of the X Games SX thing, was placed on the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki team by request from Monster but he doesn't know what he's doing just yet. He could race 450s for the whole season or he could race one coast in the Lites. Either way, when he's not racing supercross here in the States he'll be hitting events around the world.

Then there's the new Jagermeister KTM team. And I say 'new' because it's

no longer run by MDK but is back under the factory awning. This team is one person strong for supercross with Tommy Searle riding the Lites, probably on the West. Outdoors, he'll be joined by Mike Alessi on the new KTM 350 – unless Alessi is leading the world title by that point and wants to stay there and try and win it.

And then, finally, rumour has it that Jason Lawrence will be out of jail in time to race all of – or at least most of – the series and he's hoping to have Nick Wey rejoin him on the team on

Yamaha's again in 2010.

In the Lites, in addition to Stroupe on the Suzuki and Searle on the KTM, Pro Circuit will be returning with Christophe Pourcel and Jake Weimer who did most of the winning in 2009 along with Tyla Rattray (in his maiden SX season) and Canada's Dean Wilson. The GEICO Powersports Honda team will field Trey Canard (in his final Lites SX season), Blake Wharton (who won a race last year), Justin Barcia (who won a National last year and who will be racing his rookie SX season) and Brett Metcalfe. Metcalfe will likely move up to the 450cc class outdoors, making room for Eli Tomac on the 250.

Star Yamaha will bring on board Nico Izzi from Factory Suzuki, Martin Davalos from factory KTM and return with Broc Tickle. In addition, Frenchman Gautier Paulin will take on the Lites West with help from David Vuillemin.

All of this leaves some pretty big names unspoken for including Michael Byrne, Timmy Ferry (both over 30), Kyle Cunningham (top Lites competitor), Kyle Chisholm (the road block from Salt Lake City last year) and others. Sometimes the smart move is to sit around and wait for a spot to fill due to injury and that's likely the plan for many of them.

THEEVENTS >>

The schedule in 2010 looks nearly identical to 2009 with the exception mainly of New Orleans disappearing from the schedule again. Instead, Dallas gets a round back inside the new biggest stadium in the world (or something like that). There is exactly one weekend off in the supercross schedule and it comes after round 12. After that, it's a five-week run for the title and it's anyone's game.



Expect plenty of bar-to-bar action when the AMA SX series kicks off at Anaheim on January 9



Above: Ryan Villopoto won a SX Main Event last year – he'll want to improve on that in 2010



Max puts in some laps
on his new Yamahauler



READY TO RACE!

THE SLOGAN MAY COME FROM HIS OLD TEAM BUT IT SUMS UP MAX PERFECTLY AFTER A MONTH DIALLING IN HIS YAMAHA FOR THE SX SEASON...

Words by MAX ANSTIE

So finally things are all coming into place and this month has been a real success with testing and getting used to the blue bike. I have been down the Yamaha supercross track nearly every day this month and have been doing really well. Training with my team-mates has helped a lot, I have done many motos with Nico (Izzi) and Broc (Tickle) over the last few weeks and as the New Year comes ever closer we are all putting in our laps to be ready for the first round. Unfortunately, I can't tell you what coast I will be riding because the teams only tell you a couple of weeks before but I hopefully will be at Anaheim the second week of January and I'll be ready to race.

Now you would expect this in England – not where I am – but here you go... We had just dropped my training bike off at Yamaha for my mechanic to check through so myself, dad and Kristers (Latvian kid who is training with me at the moment) went up to this really nice place to ride mountain bikes. It was like a super-expensive area but for training was really good. We had our MTB bikes in the back and one of my old KTMs we were going to drop in at the KTM factory. Our boots, fuel, ramp and some tyres were also in the back of the pick-up.

So we parked up in this parking lot which was full of little kids on a school trip and loads of cars. By the time we unloaded our MTB bikes all the kids had walked off somewhere and we took off on our cycle. One hour later we rolled back to the truck and the bike and both pairs of boots were gone! You could see where someone had just unloaded it and rode it down the road with our two pairs of boots! We have been so many places and in America after a while you don't even think about locking stuff up because so many people leave everything out and nothing ever happens. So, anyway, after that me and Kristers ran off looking for the bike but with no luck and with the police unable to do a lot we headed home.

After some more days at the supercross track it was time to go meet all the bosses at Yamaha! Unable to drive (because I can't get my licence until Jan) I had to get a lift with Nico and Broc. So at 6.15am I'm sat outside the Yamaha shop where they were meant to be picking me up and by 6.30 we were supposed to be on our way. So 6.30 comes and goes and my dad had to leave me standing there because he had to go train Kristers. I tried calling Broc and Nico and after a while I figured they hadn't got up. Ha ha ha!

So after a bit of confusion we were finally on our way. We got an email the day before explaining that we all were going to have to serve breakfast to all the Yamaha employees! Really weird but sure enough when we got there 100s of people were all lining up outside the massive factory for pancakes. Unsure of what we had to do, I spoke to Larry Brooks and within minutes we were giving out pancakes and cleaning up people's plates and all that fun stuff!

After meeting all the Yamaha people we headed over to Nick Wey's house to pick up his 450 J-Law bike so I could train on that for outdoors a little and it also gave my dad something to have some fun on.

Next up was Thanksgiving which is a harvest festival celebrated primarily in the United States and Canada. Traditionally, it is a time to give thanks for the harvest and express gratitude in general. And you get loads of turkey! The Americans consider this as almost a bigger holiday than Christmas.

So here I am writing my 34th column! In 34 months I have come from getting ready to race the European championship to now getting ready to race supercross. And not Sheffield – I'm talking about James Stewart supercross. Racing against the world's best. Just over a month away! Max is finally here after 16 years...

Max

© kripres

Nick Wey may rejoin J-Law
on Yamahas next year

MAX POWER



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MONEY TALK!

OUR INDUSTRY INSIDER HOOKS UP WITH A RIDER INSIDER TO GET THE TRUTH ON THE PAY STATE OF PLAY ON THE STATESIDE SX SCENE...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

Want to know how it really is? I got a top rider to spill his guts on his wages and expenses provided that I don't give out his identity. Read on as Rider X vents about the US SX scene...

"There are a lot of people that say we're overpaid and they're right a bit but we're the ones taking the most risk. We could break our arm badly, we could hurt our knee which will bother us for the rest of our lives or we could die. That may sound dramatic but it's true. We are making a lot of money compared to the average guy but we're the talent. Without us the mechanics wouldn't have a job, the teams wouldn't exist and the whole sport would collapse. We're the guys that are risking our lives out there and if you don't think that's true ask the family of that kid that died at San Diego a few years ago.

"These people drive me nuts – overpaid compared to what? If any of those keyboard racers were offered money to ride a dirt bike would they take it? Are you going to tell an Eric Kehoe or whoever that's offering you money that you don't want it? Are you going to go up to Jimmy Button, Ernesto Fonseca or Doug Henry and tell them they were overpaid while they raced? That might change your perspective on that. Or maybe go tell a family whose kid died racing that he was making too much.

"Take everything into consideration when you're thinking about it. Baseball, basketball guys are all making way more than we make and if you think about the investment that a family puts into a baseball player vs the investment that parents make to make their kid fast it's peanuts. Yet we're overpaid? If anything I think motocross athletes are tremendously underpaid along with the core people in the industry.

"When a rider shows up with his trainer, he's got a practice bike mechanic, a water truck, a bitchin' practice track and everyone looks at that like it's so cool to have but it all costs. And if you want to beat the guys you're racing against you have to have this stuff also. It is cool to have but it's an expense. You're spending a ton of money simply on up-keep.

"Now the guys have two supercross tracks and what's next? Two outdoor tracks? Those things aren't cheap to build, maintain and insure. We are spending a ton of money on all this stuff. The top guys are giving back to the moto community in a way with all their spending. We aren't just taking the money and running with it. As far as figures go it's 20K for a SX track, 30 to 40K for practice bike guy, you have to have the land that can run you half-a-million dollars. It's 30K for the water truck, 20K for a tractor. You have some guys with full-on dozers that are 60, 70K. The practice guys need places to live or some riders pay their guys more so that they can move from wherever to wherever.

"We also all mostly have disability insurance and that can run pretty high. I heard that Chad and James pay upwards of \$300,000 for disability. Some of the other guys are 20 to 30 thousand. That's so if it all ends tomorrow we're taken care of at the income level we're at right now. Plus people always seem to forget about the taxes – if you're making a ton of money most likely you're in the 50 per cent tax bracket. That's right off the top – with write-offs and everything like that you could be in the 40 per cent range. That's still a lot of money to Uncle Sam.

An agent can make from seven to 10 per cent of your salary. I'm hearing now that the agents are getting a percentage of riders' bonuses and that's bulls**t. My guy gets eight per cent of everything that I make salary wise. Their job is to sell a rider and that's all they should get. They didn't earn those bonuses. A guy making 10 million is now making five and they have upkeep and investment into their riding. I'm not saying poor riders or anything like that but maybe people should realise some things.

"To be honest I'm not surprised at these kids that blow all this money and are broke. Guys like Hansen are not a surprise to me and that's only because of all the stuff I spoke about already. You pay more taxes, more property tax, you want to have a nice house and a nice car because you feel that you earned it with your hard work. And at one time Hansen did work hard to get to where he is now and people don't realise that you pay more than a normal person would because you have money. People and companies see you coming a mile away.

"To see the kids go through it is not surprising, you're kind of famous in a way so you spend money, people scam you and you're not very educated. You're young and the people that are maybe advising you have never had this much money themselves and now they're telling you what to do with it? Agents, family or whoever aren't always the best judges of what to do with your money. Or it can go the other way where the kid comes in, makes a ton of money and tells his family to screw off and he can handle everything now. Soon, he's broke also.

"Another thing that's amazing to me is how underpaid the mechanics are in the industry. You got some guys making 20K to work on a team and expected to live in California for that much. He's in charge of a bike with an athlete making maybe over a million dollars a year on it. If that guy leaves a bolt loose or something like that and the rider crashes, that's a big-bucked guy on the sideline all because you could only afford to pay a guy 20,000. You get what you pay for and it's amazing that these teams try to cheat out with team personnel.

"Salaries are definitely on the downward ways right now – the good days are over and I'm lucky I got a deal. Our sport is f**cked up in the sense that

the guys in fifth to seventh are making 500,000 or less and the guy four spots ahead is making 10 times that. The rider in 15th is maybe making 30,000 a year and his team is probably looking to screw him out of that.

"A rider like Ivan Tedesco or Tim Ferry probably makes around 150,000 for everything they wear head to toe. That's probably being on the high side. And that's if you make every race because if you get hurt and don't you get docked from all these companies. And we're all going to get hurt at one time or another. Some companies are less forgiving than others – some gear contracts are broken into 28 races and every race you miss they're taking a 28th of your salary. If you miss the whole year you're out but yet they get to keep using your likeness for ads. Like I said they don't all do that but they all dock you for missing races.

"For me – and maybe this is jealousy – it's tough to see the top guys fly in a private jet, get picked up by a motorhome driver, get everything they can in their favour and then the guy in 10th place is making 100,000. The gap in our sport is too big, there's not much there for the guys further down. Not to say the first place guy doesn't deserve it but the industry shouldn't put so much emphasis on the winners. There are drivers that never win in NASCAR but are marketed smart and can make a living. We don't have that – why don't the companies market riders and not worry so much on results because there isn't much separation from third to 15th?

"Why doesn't some goofball company hire Jason Lawrence and market him to a segment that they want to sell to? Nick Wey is an example – he's built a great image through MSR and he's not close to winning. He's all over the magazines. If there isn't a 10th place guy there's no race. You can't say that there's a ton of guys ready to take that 10th place guy's spot because there isn't that many guys that can ride supercross. You can't have Stewart lapping the guy in three laps. That doesn't look good.

"What drives me nuts is the people that are getting paid to do nothing. There are so many people in our industry that are overpaid and underpaid, it's ridiculous. You have mechanics that are working over 100 hours a week – just ridiculous hours and it kills them. Then you have guys that just hang out and do nothing. There are 100 guys that can build goggles and we're going to pay them more than the small percentage that can split cases on a four-stroke?

"There are a lot of guys that get paid to hang out at the races, be the cool guy and deliver energy drinks to motorhomes and then there are guys that are struggling to make a \$1000 rent payment. That's a problem in our sport."



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WED 23RD DEC	9AM-6PM
THU 24TH DEC	9AM-4PM
FRI 25TH DEC	CLOSED
SAT 26TH DEC	CLOSED
SUN 27TH DEC	CLOSED
MON 28TH DEC	10AM-4PM
TUE 29TH DEC	9AM-5PM
WED 30TH DEC	9AM-5PM
THU 31ST DEC	9AM-5PM
FRI 1ST JAN	CLOSED
SAT 2ND JAN	9AM-5PM

HONDA									
CR85	2005 S/W	£1,399	KO144	2007	£2,699	RM125	2008	£2,899	ENDURO/TRAIL
CR85	2006 S/W	£1,499	KO144	2008	£2,799	RMZ 250	2008	£2,999	
CR85	2007 S/W	£1,699	KO250F	2005	£1,899	RM 250	2006	£2,499	KTM
CR 125	2005	£1,999	KO250F	2008	£2,799	RM 250	2007	£2,699	EXC250
CR 125	2007	£2,399	KO250F	2009	£3,799	RMZ 450	2007	£2,499	
CRF 250	2007	£2,499	KO250	2006	£2,499	RMZ 450	2009	£3,799	HUSQVARNA
CRF450	2005	£2,299	KO250	2007	£2,599				TE 250
CRF450	2008	£2,599	KO450F	2008	£2,899	YAMAHA			
			KO450F	2009	£3,899	YZ125	2005	£1,999	YAMAHA
			KO450F	2010	£4,599	YZ125	2008	£2,699	WR250
						YZ250F	2008	£2,799	WR450
						YZ250	2008	£2,999	
KAWASAKI									
KO85	2004	£1,299							
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THE GREAT ESCAPE!

IT'S PEEING DOWN IN THE UK, YOUR FAVOURITE TRACK'S MORE SUITED TO JETSKIING THAN MX AND THE NEXT SUNNY DAY'S NOT FORECAST UNTIL EARLY MARCH SO WHAT CAN YOU DO? HOW ABOUT JETTING OFF TO SoCAL WHERE THE SUN ALWAYS SHINES, TRACKS ARE PLENTIFUL AND BIKES COME FULLY PREPPED AND READY TO RIP...

Words by **Chris Cayford** Photos by **still-mx.co.uk**

The English summer can be a beautiful although usually short-lived experience while the English winter is usually the opposite – ugly and long. Both seasons hinder our beloved sport – too much dust in the summer, too much mud in the winter. It's a lose/lose thing.

Probably the best possible solution to this dilemma is to head Stateside where not only are they spoilt for weather, motocross is viewed as a socially acceptable sport. Sound like heaven? We organised a trip with Stephen Heighton at Race SoCal to find out for ourselves.

To make things even more interesting we dragged along Greg Hanson and Terry House and entered them both into the World Vet Championship at Glen Helen. So the plan for the week was to sample as many of California's finest practice tracks as physically possible and finish our trip by taking on the 'world' at Glen Helen. Not bad for a bunch of bumpkins from the UK!

No sooner had we booked the trip I was trawling through internet sites looking for the cheapest flight. Depending on the time of year prices vary from around £250 to £500, assuming you're happy flying cattle class. We managed to find a flight with United Airlines for £407 all-in, not bad considering it was half-term week. With a flight time of over 11 hours you're going to want to be carrying some decent reading material (DBR!) as well as a few snacks to help along the way. Food and drink is supplied FOC with the major airlines – although alcohol is chargeable if you fly UA economy (much to Myles' disgust)...

Stephen had organised to collect us from LAX, a service he offers to all of his customers. There are a number of hire car firms based at the airport so pre-booking a vehicle prior to your arrival is a definite option but if you feel like I did after all that time in the air a lift is the way forward. Race SoCal are based 70 odd miles from the airport, a journey that you're unlikely to see much of once you've dozed off with your head knocking against the window!

Our place of stay was situated in Murrieta, south of Los Angeles. A typically quiet and picturesque American town, it's a welcome sight after a full day travelling. The first thing we all wanted to do was crash out but it was the worst thing we could've done – the jet lag takes its toll over the coming days but the later you stay up on the first night the better. With my body clock still operating at UK time (seven hours ahead) I found myself waking up at 4.30am for the first couple of nights but it got better as the trip progressed.

Our first day was spent acclimatising with sight-seeing rather than riding planned. Stephen employs a cook (Denise – she's lovely!) to rustle up a breakfast every weekday morning, then it was time for a bit of retail therapy! Famous shops such as Langston Racing (now Langston Motorsport), Pro-Circuit, Chaparral and Troy Lee Designs are only a stone's throw away, all of which will have you reaching for your wallet. It's all too easy to impulse buy and blow your budget early but I managed to come away having only splurged on a new set of Troy Lee kit... >>

WEST
CROSS PAR

*Given half a chance
Greg Hanson would
spend "all year, every
year" turning laps
in SoCal*





You can watch top pros like Ryan Villopoto in action from the side of the road

STAR SPOTTING!

RUB SHOULDERS WITH THE PROS

You'll often see some of the pros and top amateurs out playing depending on the time of year – supercross tends to decide where they practice during the winter months but if you're out there near the start of the Nationals you'll be amazed at who comes flying past! During our stay we shared a track with Ryan Hughes, Doug Dubach and Grant Langston as well as Michael Sleeter and Sean Borkenhagen who were testing the new 350SX-F (complete with suspension link).

We were also fortunate enough to get an invite from Tommy Searle to the KTM test track but generally speaking it's hard to get anywhere near KTM, Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha test facilities without authority as they're all based on private land. The one track where you can stop and have a good watch is Kawasaki which is situated right on the edge of the freeway outside of Corona. Our factory photographer – aka Myles Adburgham – got some cracking shots of Villopoto, Rattray, Weimer and co from the roadside.

Chris Cayford rips it up at Glen Helen



Greg takes the wheel...



If you're lucky you might even get an invite to the KTM test track from Tommy Searle



TRACKTASTIC!

TAKE YOUR PICK...

The tracks at your disposal are all superb. Starwest, Milestone, Pala Raceway, Lake Elsinore, Cahuilla Creek, Perris, Glen Helen and Competitive Edge – they're all within an hour-and-a-half from the house, most within 40 minutes. The American style of circuit tends to be jumpy which might be a bit off-putting for some at first but the layout and preparation of every track tends to inspire confidence. Before long I was jumping tabletops that would normally take me weeks to build up to in the UK.

There's an art to building a track that caters for most levels of rider and the Yanks have it down to a tee. Facilities such as Pala Raceway and Milestone have several tracks, a popular one at both being the vet track which is a tamed down yet still challenging version of the main circuits. I'd go as far as to say the vet tracks out there put a lot of our circuits in the UK to shame. Sad but true.

The facilities tend to open early (around 8.30am) and close early (usually 2pm) which worked out pretty good as with our jet lag early mornings were never a problem. You'll be amazed at how quiet the tracks are during the week, there could've only been 25 people at Starwest on the Tuesday which meant no groups and ample saddle time. Perris, Milestone and Starwest also run flood-lit evening sessions on certain days, perfect if you want to avoid the mid-day heat.

Unfortunately, Terry had to catch a flight later in the week and landed a few days into our stay. But Greg was practising at Milestone the day after we arrived. Trying to shake off a nasty cold and get acclimatised sooner rather than later, a day's practising was just what the doctor ordered – even though by his own admission he paid for it the next day. This was Greg's second visit in a year. "I'd be out here all year, every year if I could," he admitted and I can understand why.

Day two was the first ride day and eagerly anticipated. Stephen knows the scene in California like the back of his hand – certain tracks tend to prep better on certain days so after a quick discussion we decided to head out to Starwest which was prepped to perfection. The type of dirt they have out there is like nothing you've seen before – it reacts well to watering and rides superbly from start to finish. Every track has superb irrigation facilities with water being laid down throughout the day, even when you're riding. Considering they have little to no annual rain it's quite something.

The bikes were taken to the track prior to our arrival by Race SoCal's resident mechanic, Anthony. Knowing all you've got to do is kit up and ride is such a good feeling. Fuel, air filters, tyre pressures – all done. The bikes were even warmed up! Stephen has always ridden red and carried the theme into his business, utilising 250F and 450F Hondas. There are also a couple of 150Fs for the whipper-snappers among us and even a 250 two-stroke if you're man enough! Greg has ridden Honda 500s, 450s, and 250s on and off for the past few years so this suited him just fine.

After each session the bikes were checked over and fuelled up but if we had any specific requirements all we had to do was ask. Anthony was on hand to take care of things, usually while putting on a comedy English accent! Sandwiches were also pre-prepared and there was an endless supply of bottled water which is vital when riding in a climate where temperatures typically vary between 70 to 90 degrees.

Terry joined us on our second ride day at Pala Raceway and though jumpy lay-outs aren't really his bag it was a good opportunity to get his 450 Suzuki dialled in for the weekend. Greg was also focusing on set up but the pair of them were mindful of the fact Glen Helen is a different animal compared to the majority of tracks in SoCal. Thankfully we'd all get a chance to sample the legendary circuit we planned to race prior to the event and what an eye-opener that would turn out to be!

Once we were done riding all that was left for us to do was get changed and be escorted home. The bikes were loaded up and taken away without us lifting a finger – you can never get too used to that! We often stopped for food on the way home. Being mid-afternoon most people had built up quite an appetite and there's no shortage of places to eat along the way (my personal choice is Hooters – great baps in there!) but beware, it's all too easy to fall into the fast food trap and do you really need that fourth taco in three days? Once back at base we had the pool/hot tub at our disposal, a great place to talk about the day's events while sipping on a cold beer.

The evenings bring pretty much whatever you want them to bring. Our usual choice was to eat out, sampling some of Cali's most wonderful steak houses and there are plenty of bars about if you fancy staying out a little later. Temecula, one of Murrieta's neighbouring towns, has a real 'western' feel to it with plenty of eateries along the main strip. Definitely worth checking out. To give you some idea of how you might feel come the evening – during our stay there were no less than 11 lads in the house at one time, most of whom were in bed by 10:30pm. People may talk about partying the nights away but once you're out there and riding the tiredness kicks in a lot harder than you'd think.

Our last practice day was spent at Glen Helen, giving us all our first glimpse of America's toughest track. We only had the infield section to play with that day but it gave us a good enough idea of what we needed to prepare for. For the first time during the trip the track was absolutely rammed with riders, all getting much needed practice before the weekend. Crowds aside, Terry and Greg were having a blast round the rough, sandy circuit. And when I say rough, I mean arm-pumping, hand-cramping, saddle-smacking rough! The braking bumps were so severe they turned into jumps towards the end of the day – I've never ridden anything like it but our 40+ Pro class competitors were lapping it up. It gave a good indicator of what was to come, although we had no real idea of what layout they were going to run come race day.

We wanted to get there early Saturday to make sure everything was set, allowing the day to run smoothly. Stephen had organised for Anthony to pitch up the rig on





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Kurt Nicoll gets on the podium at Glen Helen

the Friday and sleep over which resulted in a decent spot for the day. We left the house at 5am and on arrival it was still dark but the bikes were already on their stands, fuelled, and prepped to go. All that was left for us to do was stick on our numbers, a tricky task at stupid o'clock.

Morning practice was at 7am and gave us the first chance to experience the race layout of the circuit. It was around twice the size of the track we rode two days prior and now included the monumental hills I found myself gawping at while watching from the grandstand earlier in the week. For the fun riders among us (me included!) it was over a three-minute lap – well over in fact. Both Greg and Terry were feeling confident and looking forward to their motos, of which there were two in each class.

Glen Helen regular and vet supremo Doug Dubach was the favourite to take top honours and one of Greg's old foes from back in the day – former KTM America boss Kurt Nicoll – was also entered. Greg got off to a mediocre start in the first moto with Terry even further back, leaving himself with a lot of work to do. The moto would see Dubach holeshot and take a commanding win while Greg pulled through to finish fourth (one place behind Nicoll) and Terry come from nowhere to finish fifth – a truly great ride from him.

Moto two saw both our boys get off to better starts with Greg lying in fourth and Terry hovering around the top eight. Dubach had again leapt from his gate and checked out early making it look easy up front. Greg started to make his move and was closing in on third with Nicoll two places further back unable to match his pace – this would've meant third place overall. But just as we were getting our hopes up disaster struck when Greg slipped off, snapping his clutch lever in the process. Unable to continue, Greg could only look on as Nicoll cruised round knowing all he had to do was hold position to claim the last spot on the podium.

In the meantime Terry was again making a charge through the pack and actually started to gain ground on Nicoll. It was all looking very good until he got massively out of shape on the huge braking bumps at the end of the start/finish straight. Somehow he managed to stay upright but stalled the bike and struggled to get her going, ending his chances of gaining any more positions. Terry eventually came in sixth overall, an impressive result considering how far back he had to come from in both motos. And carrying on the good form Luke Dewey won the 25+ class, upholding Brit pride!

We didn't really know what to expect coming into the day but soon realised we were in with a shout of decent result. If Lady Luck had been on our side (or if we had ASV levers!) we might have bagged ourselves a podium but it wasn't to be.

After the racing was done the BBQ was rolled out – a nice end to an enjoyable day and a fantastic trip.

THE VERDICT!

GET PALLY IN CALI...

So was it worth the long jaunt across the pond? My personal opinion – along with the rest of the folk on the trip – is a resounding 'yes!' If you only ever do it once it's well worth seeing how it's done in Cali and will give you an insight into why the Americans are so good at the sport.

Stephen also offers packages for the SX season giving you the chance to not only ride but to witness the spectacle that is AMA Supercross. Special event trips for the opening AMA National at Glen Helen as well as the 2010 MXdN at Thunder Valley will also be available. Contact Stephen at Race SoCal at stephen@racesocal.com or visit their website www.racesocal.com for more details.

Thanks to Stephen and all the guys at Race SoCal for putting on a bloody good show – see you next year then!



Steve Heighton certainly knows how to lay on an MX holiday



Brap, braap, braaaaaap!



Greg and Steve



A broken clutch lever costs Greg a place on the podium

THE GREAT
ESCAPE!

All Balls – yep Geoff, you're fluent in that language!



Experiment with the stepped retaining nut to find a tension that suits you

HEAD JOB!

WHEN YOUR STEERING'S STIFFER THAN A DEAD DOG IT'S TIME TO GET BUSY WITH NEW BEARINGS...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by still-mx.co.uk

Headstock bearings on all dirt bikes need to be looked after with regularity here in the UK. The problem is that the headstock area takes in a lot of crud and water during riding and especially washing which collects in the tapered bearings and corrodes them, making the running surfaces of both the bearing rollers and the running outer cups uneven. This gives you that notchy feeling.

The headstock area is a weak point on most Japanese dirt bikes as they are primarily made for sunnier areas such as California where there isn't a lot of need to wash the bikes after each ride as they are normally used in perfectly dry conditions. Once the bearings are damaged like this there is really only one solution – you must replace the bearings and cups.

The job is made easier these days as there are complete replacement bearing kits available from 'All Balls' at most local dealers. These kits are pretty well priced and the bearings are good quality. The kits contain all the seals required and both top and bottom bearings and cups. Handy!

This walkthrough is using a YZ250 but the steps are the same for all Japanese bikes. During the process I use a press to remove and replace the lower bearing. Pullers are available as well so make sure you have or borrow the correct tools for the job to make things as easy as possible. And as usual make sure the bike is as clean as possible before you start and there's a clear bench area set up to lay your parts out on in order.

When you look at the area to be worked on it's easy to think there may be shortcuts to do the job but this one requires every part to be removed from the front area of the bike. Disassemble the front of the bike in an orderly fashion as instructed. Front wheel, front mudguard, front brake, front numberplate, handlebars (if you don't have a skinny spanner to undo top clamp nut) and one fork leg.

Leave one fork leg in place so you can undo the top clamp retaining nut – this is normally a 30/32mm nut. When the top nut is loosened remove the fork leg then the nut can be taken off and the top clamp removed. Make sure you set all parts in order.

The stepped retainer is now exposed so either with your hands or a set of adjustable

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Carefully tap out the top bearing cup



Make sure you get the correct cups - they can be different - before tapping them into place



It's important to clean away all the old grease and gunk



Don't skimp on the grease when you're reassembling

grips you can undo this and remove the rest of the triple clamp assembly and top bearing and seal.

The areas around the bearing cups must now be cleaned of the old grease and these will then need to be carefully tapped out of place using a very sharp-edged drift or punch. This part of the job can either be very tricky or very easy. Take your time and tap the cups out of position before cleaning the area top and bottom where the cups have come out and then it's time to tap the new cups into position. Make sure you get the correct cup into each end of the headstock as they can be different.

Make sure the cup is level at all times when you are tapping it in - I use a bearing and seal driver as it is made from ally and does not

damage the hard bearing surface as I drive it into position.

The top bearing is easy to replace now but the bottom bearing is a different story. It is time to set the press up and push the stem out of the lower clamp. Once the stem is pressed out the bearing and seal release from the shaft and can be binned. The stem is then pressed back into place followed by the new bottom bearing and seal.

The bearing MUST be well greased with waterproof grease before you fit it. The grease must be forced into the bearing as a coating around the outside is not enough. Take some time to push the grease through every gap you can see. I press the bearing into place using one of the old cups to spread the load evenly over

the new bearing without causing any damage.

The tough parts of the job are over now and it's time to reverse the disassembly steps making sure every part is cleaned and greased as you go. You may have to play around with the stepped retaining nut on top of the stem to get the correct steering tension as some people like the steering to run completely free and some like a small amount of tension on the steering. As a rule when you set the tension on the stepped nut always expect the steering to tighten up around another 30 per cent when you tighten the very top triple clamp nut.

So there it is, a sparkly new set of All Balls fitted and smooth-as-silk steering achieved - now go and ride but don't forget to grease the bearings after a few months to keep 'em tip top! |

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Words by Geoff Walker

FOULPLAY?

Hi Geoff,

I hope you can help me with the problem I'm having with my Honda CR125 2006 model. I have had the bike two months now as I have moved up from the big wheel class and have come across a problem.

My bike does not start unless I change the spark plug and even then it will only start once or twice and then it won't start again. This problem has lingered with my bike for a while now and I am running out of ideas fast! I have changed the stator plate, coil and several spark plugs which almost rules out the whole electrical side of the bike! I'm beginning to wonder if it is something very serious. Any help would be much appreciated.

Aidan, West Sussex

As with most problems like this there are a few things it could be. The plugs sound like they are fouling so each one you try is taking a bit of a hit of mixed fuel and after a point it is not coping with the influx of fuel to ignite. If you have changed the stator and coil it seems you have gone for it on the electrical side.

I have had to change plug caps before – sometimes they don't take kindly to washing so after you wash your bike the damp can make the spark less powerful and the plug will foul. Another one to try is to start the bike with the choke off if the weather is not too cold, this will stop too much fuel flooding into the motor. If you use the choke make sure you close it just after starting.

The final thing to maybe think about is the compression. If the piston ring is a little worn then you will not be getting a strong and efficient burn when the bike is trying to start. Maybe think about popping a new piston kit into your weapon and giving that a shot.

Good luck...

TIDYTRIM!

Hey Geoff,

I was shocked this month when I read my letter in your column – it seems years since I wrote to you as I've had a lot going on but I thought I would let you know what's what anyway.

If you remember I was running a 125 with a 144 Athena kit, FMF exhaust system, V-Force reeds and a VHM head which popped like a four-stroke when flat-out. It seemed to lose power down low and was more top-end happy so I stripped it down and the piston was scored and so was the barrel so I thought f**k this and put it back to a 125 again.

After I warmed it up I did a few laps on a loop we have then gave it beans and it started to pop again so I started messing around with the jets and again it wanted to go leaner but I didn't want to blow it up. As I was revving it on the stand I noticed the sidepanel was moving in so I pulled it off and the popping went. It ran mint so when I got home I decided to look for a blockage and it was the seatcover all along! Where the new one had been fitted the loose pieces that hadn't been trimmed must have got sucked into the air passages in the top of the airbox stopping air flow. Now I've trimmed them the problem's gone but who would have thought of that?

John, via email

That's a cracker! Also a new one on me – I could have been sending you advice for a long time to get that one sorted! Glad you sussed it out...

WIN!WIN!WIN!

ISO2 SWAG UP FOR GRABS >>>

Got a prep problem? Is your stoker sickly? Your four-banger bust? Or are you simply a short-arse struggling to secure your steed on its stand? Well help is at hand in the form of our tip-top tech and his top tech tips! Email Geoff with your technical teasers at geoffwalkerdb@aol.com Each month Geoff will answer a selection of readers' letters and each month our favourite will win an awesome ISO2 Nutrition products package – worth over £60 – plus a drinks bottle and drinks mixer. Check out the full range of ISO2 Nutrition products at www.iso2nutrition.co.uk

FLOODWARNING!

Hi Geoff,

I could really do with some help here with my 1990 Honda CR250. I've owned my bike for seven years now and never had any problem with it until now.

It won't start on the kickstart but it will start if you bump it. I do all my own repairs as I'm a mechanic and so is my dad. We ain't stupid but this one has stumped us. The piston has not done many hours and compression is high, the spark plug is new and it's had new reed valves as they were distorted. I've got an excellent spark, I've stripped the carb and cleaned it and set it up and I've drained the fuel tank and put fresh fuel in. The exhaust is not blocked, the air filter is new, the power valve is free and in the closed position when it should be, the throttle slider is free moving and the needle and jets don't look worn. The throttle cable works fine, the engine kill switch works fine, the kickstart turns the engine over too.

But when I kick the bike over it just floods the engine instantly when cold although once the engine has warmed up it will start fine on the kickstart. I think I'm either missing something obvious or I'm being a dimwit...

Neil, Norwich

It sounds like you are on the gas with your repairs and there doesn't seem to be any clear reason for the fault as you have covered most areas. Good work.

As your bike runs fine when it's warm and starts fine on the kickstart it could be a case of some damp getting into an area of the electrics or even something as simple as an over-oiled air filter. I have seen many cases where the air filter will not allow enough air through when it has just been replaced and the bike will flood as it is not getting the correct fuel/air mix.

When oiling the filter try drying all excess oil from it by wrapping it in paper towels – this will give you a consistent air flow each time you start your bike from cold. The damp thing is unlikely but it's still probably worth checking the stator and electrical connections after washing as the spark could be lacking punch if there's a little bit of moisture in the system but as it dries out it becomes stronger, allowing the bike to start easier...





IS YOUR CHILD SENDING OUT DISTRESS SIGNALS WITHOUT EVEN REALISING THEY'RE DOING IT? LEARN TO SPOT THE SIGNS AND YOU'LL HAVE A CHIPPER NIPPER...

Words by Neil Drew

Several times I've looked at the implications of placing undue stress and pressure on children and I've also looked at ways of communicating with children. In this month's article I'm going to look at some of the signs that your child may be suffering undue pressure and stress that very often go unnoticed because they tend to appear gradually rather than just happen overnight.

There are a great many signs that a child is suffering – too many to go into – but I'll look at some of the more common ones that will give you as either a parent or manager the opportunity to do something about it. However, it's also important to be clear that stress shown at the race track might also be coming from other sources and that racing may just be the place where it becomes more apparent.

One of the many other things to take into account as possible sources of stress is schooling. Very often the pressure to perform

and do homework, get good results and be in a higher grade of class can place huge amounts of pressure on a child. So when it comes to having to perform at the track this can very often be the place where the child feels it the most because their results and performance are on show for all to see.

Medical issues are on occasion to blame and if you have any concerns at all then they should always be ruled out first. Sibling rivalry is another source of stress – the feeling of having to match up to a more successful brother or sister. Sometimes it can even be that the child has a successful parent and this is always being thrown at the child. Or it can come from a parent who has had a go at sport, been unsuccessful and is now living his or hers dreams through their child.

Rarely but still to be considered is that a child can be bullied at school while a more common one is the "do you know how much we spend

on you?" syndrome which is usually a last ditch threat placed by the parents in a bid to control the child.

By now you will understand that stress in a child can come from many different sources and can have a profound impact on performance on the day. Next I'll explore some of the more common signs – again I must emphasise that stress and some of the other things I'm going to describe should always be checked out first by a GP simply to rule out anything medical. But more often than not stress and the physical signs are brought on by psychological stressors.

✱ Over-reacting with tantrums to a poor result: This one is common and is very often a way of the child saying "if I am outwardly showing how distraught I am hopefully you will leave me alone" or "I want you to see I am angry so please keep calm as I want you to avoid being angry and embarrassing me".

DREW WHO?

COMPETITION MIND COACH

Neil Drew is a former MX and enduro racer and a qualified sports mind coach. At present he is coaching two national champions and several GP competitors and has helped many amateur and professional athletes from all over the world. He can be contacted via DBR or by email at neil@competitionmind.co.uk



★ **Nervous tics:** This is commonly of physiological origin and is mostly seen by way of involuntary twitches sometimes with erratic blinking, screwing facial muscles up, erratic sideways twitching of the head. It is involuntarily and created as a release of stress.

★ **Excessive crying and tears for no apparent reason:** Usually this is exaggerated by tiredness and at its worst can become uncontrollable during times of the most heightened stress and pressure. It could also, to be fair, be that the child has discovered this is the best way to manipulate to get their own way.

★ **Outbursts of rage:** This one can often be seen in the paddock – the child is given some form of criticism and they erupt with rage. This is usually a form of defence and sometimes it can be a cry for help for the parent to actually listen rather than continually attack and criticise

the child. Obviously, in some cases hormones can play a part!

★ **Obsessive compulsive behaviours:** These come in various different forms like touching rituals or some other form of seemingly odd behaviour which a child has adopted to comfort themselves.

★ **Bed wetting:** More common than you would think, again it is important to have any medical conditions ruled out before you look at the psychological aspect but it is usually caused by underlying stress.

These are only some of the many outward signs that there could be an underlying problem which could affect your child's performance. If your GP rules out a medical condition then you need to have open and honest dialogue with your child and get them to open up. Also, look at

how you may be treating your child and think about how you are communicating. What pressures are you placing on the child? What are you holding them to ransom over? Do you make them feel guilty? Are you continually comparing them to other children? Are you over-working them? What is the atmosphere like at home and when travelling to an event?

It is also important to consider the relationships that your child has with other children – including school friends, brothers and sisters and other children at the race track. Be more aware of the bigger picture of what is happening in your child's life.

The hardest job in the world is to be a great parent – we're not given a manual when a child's born that tells us how to do it right so the best place to start is by listening to them. Nurture and care, encourage and support, help them to become independent and confident.

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Ben Saunders dives up the inside of defending MX1 champion David Campbell

THIRD TIME LUCKY!

AFTER MISSING OUT IN '07 AND '08, BEN SAUNDERS LIFTS THE 2009 AMCA MX1 TITLE...

Words and photos by Mike Wood



He's only gone and done it!! After falling at the last hurdle in both the 2007 and 2008 AMCA MX1 championship chases, Ben Saunders eventually got past the finish post in 2009 to earn that coveted title – although in typical Saunders style it was far from plain sailing!

Trailing Brad O'Leary since the opening exchanges and suffering big offs at both rounds five and six, it looked like another season of heartache for the Delkevic Kawasaki pilot. On this occasion though the former ACU Under 21 double champion regained his composure and found top form just at the right time, taking victory in the last seven motos of the series with a motocross masterclass.

Over in MX2, Phil Mercer and Lee Dunham were again the top two finishers although in 2009 the roles were reversed. Young Dunham,

following another intense winter of training and tuition from Mark Hucklebridge, fired out of the starting blocks with all guns blazing. Such was his incredible dominance that he entered the final round of the series a massive 149 points clear of Mercer and requiring just an 11th place finish to sew-up his first ever AMCA title. Over the season Dunham claimed seven out of eight possible podium placings including five top-step spots. Indeed, the only time Dunham missed the podium was during the final round at Norley when after confirming the title he decided to take a well-earned break and sit out the last moto of the series.

Going back to the opening round of the AMCA MX1 chase at Culham and Saunders took two out of three moto wins, his copybook being blotted by a heavy second race crash. In that moto it was to be new boy on the block

Brad Turner who took the honours. Having moved across from the ACU and despite also taking the overall win during round three at Cleobury, Turner never materialised into a serious title contender mainly due to a strange season of erratic inconsistency.

After the Culham action it was fast-starting Charlie Hollis who led the championship standings, just two points ahead of O'Leary. With O'Leary then bagging overall victory during a dust-disrupted round two at Bevercotes – quickly backed up by another podium placing at Cleobury – the Proppa Gear4 KTM rider was already 35 points ahead of Hollis with Saunders a further 18 points adrift.

But just to prove what an unpredictable series this was, Saunders then dug deep and bounced back in style to fire a serious warning shot to all his title rivals by producing a super



three-ride maximum at round four at Kerry. While Ben enjoyed the spoils of victory – sharing the podium with defending champion David Campbell and Hollis – O’Leary endured a Welsh nightmare, injuring his left hand and also having a stone punch a hole in the gearbox casing of his bike during practice.

After working hard to reduce O’Leary’s title advantage to just five points, Saunders then spectacularly undid his progress during his next outing at Branston with a massive moto one off. On a sticky Staffordshire circuit he bravely bounced back – rope burns and all – to still share the moto wins on the day with O’Leary and Campbell. >>





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Brad Turner had an erratic season in MX1



Elliot Barrs suffers another injury-hit season



Alan Pearce (#331) leads Brad O'Leary (#2) and Ben Saunders (#4) at Walterstone

With the series now well past its halfway point the stakes were high and the tension rising as O'Leary and Saunders had a big coming together in the early exchanges of moto one at Nympsfield. As Saunders was forced to retire with a broken radiator, a battered and bruised O'Leary remounted to earn more vital championship points. In the remaining action the title-chasing top two both then picked up a moto win apiece although overall victory on the day went to a delighted Elliot Barrs who was returning to action after another campaign ruined by injury.

Entering the penultimate round at Walterstone it was still O'Leary the leader on 830 points with Hollis on 807 and Saunders on 789 although it was about to be all-change at the top. Showing no title-chasing jitters, Saunders proceeded to blast his Kawasaki to a glorious maximum as

O'Leary endured a very bad day at the office. The innocent victim of two very tough opening turns, Brad twice tasted soil before recovering from last to very hard-earned ninth and 13th places before finishing the day with a far more productive third spot. So now, for the first time since the opening race of the season, it was Saunders who led the MX1 standings, leap-frogging both O'Leary and Hollis to lead the way with a 23-point advantage.

Going into the final round at Norley just 43 points separated the top four of Saunders, O'Leary, Hollis and Campbell. But any thoughts of the series going right down to the wire were to be totally demolished by a supremely confident Saunders. In determined fashion he finished the job in style with a comfortable hat-trick of moto wins while a last race fall meant it was to be total heartache for O'Leary as the KTM pilot was

robbed of a final top three placing after leading the title race for the majority of its duration. Instead the retiring duo of Hollis and Campbell finished in the silver and bronze medal positions.

After holding fifth overall in MX1 for much of the season, James Russell was forced to sit out the final meeting of the season after being struck in the eye by a flying stone at Walterstone. Moving into the position located by Russell was former top BSMA youth rider Tim Truman who produced a very consistent debut AMCA season aboard his 450F Doodson Suzuki.

What about MX2 then? Well, the immaculate Lee Dunham was to start in style with overall victory at Culham ahead of the consistently fast-starting Matt Porter and KTM-mounted Lee Payne. Riding almost on his own doorstep, reigning champion Phil Mercer had just one of those crazy days when he regularly found >>



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himself in the wrong place at the wrong time with falls restricting him to a disappointing 11th overall.

Round two at Bevercotes and, in another meeting embarrassingly affected by dust, Mercer bounced back to earn second overall although it was the stylish Dunham who was to again take the win with Porter, Payne, Mark Hooley, Shane Holmes and Sean Frayne all in the frame. Unfortunately, Bevercotes was to be title contender Payne's last appearance until round seven at Walterstone as just one day later he broke a bone in his back during a club meeting.

Determined to keep alive his chances of retaining his title, Mercer took two race wins and the overall verdict during round three at Cleobury although the consistent Dunham already held a 50-point advantage at the top of the MX2 table with Porter in second. Taking third overall at Cleobury was rising young star Jack Taylor,

displaying super resolve and determination despite having his bikes stolen early season while practising at Dunkirk.

Proving that to be a motocross champion you not only need to win races but produce high points scoring performances when the chips are down, Dunham delivered in style with a stunning ride in the final moto of the day at Kerry during round four. After being run over and getting his handlebars badly bent, Lee picked himself up, dusted himself down then proceeded to brilliantly blast from last up to an

incredible fourth. His heroic effort was enough to earn another podium placing with second overall behind Mercer and just ahead of fast-starting Mark Hooley.

On his own soil at Nympsfield Dunham >>



Shane Holmes ends the season fifth overall in the MX2 class



Sean Frayne leads defending MX2 champion Phil Mercer

Jamie Powell nails a holeshot at Bevercotes



Brad O'Leary leads MX1 for almost the entire season but ends the year in fourth



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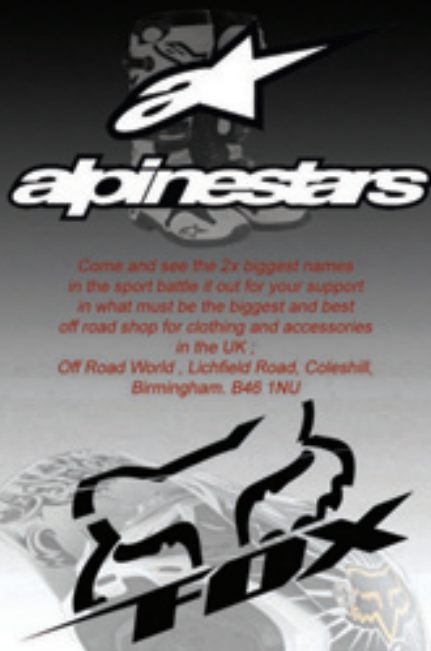
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FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

MX1 >>

1 Ben Saunders	Delkevic Kawasaki	1149 points
2 Charlie Hollis	Proppa Honda	1080
3 David Campbell	Corby Kawasaki	1077
4 Brad O'Leary	Proppa Gear4 KTM	1062
5 Tim Truman	Doodson Suzuki	927
6 Jamie Powell	KTM	868
7 James Russell	Homer Racing Honda	805
8 Richard Meakin	Proppa Honda	764
9 Danny Blakeley	250cc Silvesters Yamaha	736
10 Alan Pearce	Kawasaki	728

MX2 >>

1 Lee Dunham	MotoXtreme Kawasaki	1188 points
2 Phil Mercer	Delkevic Kawasaki	1067
3 Matt Porter	Select Homes Honda	991
4 Mark Hooley	Craigs Motorcycles KTM	974
5 Shane Holmes	Ride MX KTM	900
6 Sean Frayne	SPS Racing Honda	889
7 Jack Taylor	Proppa Gear4 KTM	857
8 Paul Neale	Kawasaki	779
9 Scott Mathia	Doodson Suzuki	747
10 Carl Benjamin	Thornbury MX Kawasaki	696



Mark Hooley heads to the overall at Norley



Charlie Hollis snatches second in MX1 at the final round



Matt Porter in action at Walterstone



Mercer leads Dunham – the positions are reversed in the final series standings



Tim Truman nets fifth in MX1

then turned the screw with another accomplished overall win and in the process further increased his championship lead to 68 points. Two weeks later and during round six at Condoover came what was to be a title-defining moment as Mercer's Kawasaki gearbox expired in the last moto of the day resulting in a critical DNF. With the experienced former GP rider out, Dunham marched relentlessly on by recording another two moto wins for yet another overall success ahead of the rapid KTM boys Hooley and Taylor and more importantly an incredible 134-point series lead. Mercer had to settle for ninth overall behind Porter, Shane Holmes, Rob Clark, Paul Neale and Frayne.

Taylor, Dunham and Hooley all won an MX2 moto each during the penultimate round at Walterstone with the result that Dunham required

just 32 points – equivalent to an 11th place finish – during the final showdown at Norley in October. Getting the business efficiently done and dusted, Dunham raced to a comfortable sixth in moto one. With the crown in the bag, Lee scored another sixth spot in the second Norley clash before sitting out the last contest of the season and enjoying a richly deserved rest.

The MX2 focus was now on the tussle for the silver medal as Mercer and Porter locked horns. It was to be outgoing champion Mercer who won that particular contest with overall victory on the day going to Hooley who was joined on the podium by fellow KTM riders Holmes and Taylor. After being plagued all season by a dodgy left knee which regularly decided to pop out of joint, Hooley must have been left wondering what could have been...

fwsx

Zach Osborne has a disappointing evening – could the American be trying too hard?



GOLDEN OLDIES!

AGE AND EXPERIENCE WIN OUT OVER YOUTHFUL EXUBERANCE AS THE BRITISH SX SERIES KICKS OFF AT BIRMINGHAM'S NEC...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty**

Around this time of year there are a few things you can rely on. Arses will get photocopied at office Chrimbo parties, ASDA will be rammed even at midnight, a fat bloke with a white beard will show up and Downtown Mike Brown will open an absolute killer can of whupass on everyone at a Future West supercross...

The Tennessee veteran – 37 years old at the last count – shows no sign of slowing down. In fact the multiple FWSX champion has had one of his most successful seasons in a long and glittering career, adding the US-based WORCS cross country title to his list of accolades as well as putting the wilies up the world's best indoor enduro aces.

And at the NEC he kicks off his Pro SX1 title defence with a commanding win on a tight and twisty track that calls for cunning as much as for flat-out speed. After his move into other off-road disciplines Brownie admits to taking a bit of time to get a feel for the sport again but once he's in the groove he's a hard man to beat.

"I started out a little rusty today in practice. I kinda stress myself out now I'm a bit older – I expect to win and it's hard to come over here and do that against these kids so I'm thankful to do that today for sure. I'm doing so much more now that supercross ain't important at all but it's in my heart – it's all I've ever done and I've done good at it and done bad at it but every time I get on a line I want to do the best I can."

And he's not the only 'veteran' kicking arse – Gordon Crockard follows Brownie home in the Pro SX1 Main Event. Making his SX debut for the Paul Bird Racing Kawasaki team, the 30-year-old – racing a super-trick 250cc two-smoker in a 250F frame – block-passes his way to third, then inherits second when

Samsung Yamaha's Ben LaMay picks up a puncture.

It's GC's second visit of the night to the podium after he earlier, er, block-passes his way to the win in the British Open final in what has to be the stand-out race of round one. After suffering a shocker of a start the Irishman charges up the field, finally carving his way from third to first with a textbook move in the 180 degree right-hander before the finishline.

"In the British final I tried to be clever and sit out of the ruts at the start because they were really deep but I was too close to the upright pillar – I clipped it and it dropped me into the rut so I got a really bad start. But I came through okay.

"That last one I wanted podium and I got second so I'm over the moon. It's a race craft thing riding around here – it's not so much about the speed. There are guys here who are faster like Osborne. I just had to park him a few times to get him pissed off and then he started doing stupid stuff and losing lots of time."

The other big winner on the night is visiting Canadian hotshot Colton Facciotti. Another regular on the FWSX tour, Colton also doubles up on the podium with his win in the SX2 Pro class backed up by third in the SX1 Pro Main Event.

"Overall it's been a pretty good night. I'd have liked to have done a little bit better in the SX1 final but things don't always work your way – I had a bad start and had to work my way up. I got lucky when a couple of guys crashed but y'know I'll take that.

"In the SX2 I got off to a great start and rode comfortable and just had fun out there, it was awesome. I come over here every year and I enjoy it – I have fun and the racing's great."

RESULTS

PRO SX1 >>

- 1 Mike Brown
- 2 Gordon Crockard
- 3 Colton Facciotti
- 4 Ben LaMay
- 5 David Goosen
- 6 Spencer Knowles

CLUBMAN OPEN >>

- 1 Chad Yarranton
- 2 Jake Hassell
- 3 Jim O'Neill
- 4 Christy Harnett
- 5 Richard Gray
- 6 Arron Jenner

PRO SX2 >>

- 1 Colton Facciotti
- 2 Mike Brown
- 3 Zach Osborne
- 4 David Goosen
- 5 Kyle Beaton
- 6 Ben LaMay

CLUBMAN LITES >>

- 1 Chad Yarranton
- 2 Dominic Foreman
- 3 Jason Varnham
- 4 Christy Harnett
- 5 Ross Clarke
- 6 Matt Bayliss

BRITISH OPEN >>

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- 2 James Dodd
- 3 Danny Tallet
- 4 Lewis Rose
- 5 Kristian Whatley
- 6 Jason Varnham

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SPECIFICATIONS >>>

Capacity: 247.7cc

Bore and stroke: 72.5mm x 60mm

Transmission: Six-speed

Fuel capacity: Eight litres

Front suspension: 40mm Marzocchi fork

Rear suspension: Sachs shock absorber

Wheelbase: 1335mm

Seat height: 665mm

Dry weight: 67kg

TRIALS AND TREACHERY!

DBR'S DEPUTY DAWG COLLECTS HIS NEW WEAPON FROM GAS GAS HQ AND GETS MORE THAN A LITTLE EXCITED ABOUT THE WHOLE DEAL...

Words by **Sutty** Photo by **Sean**

The offices in which I work are creepy as hell after hours as the whole building literally creaks and squeaks and scares the bejesus out of anyone unfortunate enough to be left behind after it goes dark. Everyone who works here has a scary story to tell whether it be of ghostly footsteps walking across an empty floor, a shadowy figure spied stooping in a corner or my own particular favourite – the ghost pooper that comes upstairs when nobody is around, lays a lengthy log in the DBR office bog and then disappears without flushing.

But despite all the stories I've heard and scary moments I've endured I have to confess that for the past few weeks I've been coming back of an evening – not to host an Yvette Fielding style séance or anything like that but to try and better my score around the DBR/T+MX/Morecambe Visitor indoor trials course.

You see, ever since visiting the Scott for the first time last month I've become obsessed with time and observation trials, I watch ninth generation VHS copies of Kickstart, pour over results lists from the Seaton Delaval club Little Bear event and I time and observe myself doing the most mundane of tasks.

The problem got worse when the constant begging and badgering of John Shirt Jnr for the loan of a long-term test bike got too much for him and he finally folded, promising to lend me a 2010 model TXT PRO 250 provided I got it insured and then left him alone. Within minutes I was on the phone to my new best mate Jimmy Mottram at Doodson Broking Group – the UK's number one insurance company when it comes to covering anything to do with motorsport – who was able to sort me right out at a very favourable price too. If you require good insurance cover in a hurry I'd recommend that you give Jimmy a call on **0161 419 3048**.

With insurance sorted and the cover note safely stored in my inbox I then just had to make the 90-mile drive to Gas Gas UK HQ, load 'er up and get 'er back to Morecambe before Shirty changed his mind. On arrival at Harpur Hill we – that's Marge, Jason from T+MX and my bad self – jumped out of TranDawg™ and dashed inside before the normal-for-Buxton force 10 gale blew us away into the Derbyshire hills. And that's when I first set my eyes on the prize...

It has to be said that the 2010 TXT PRO 250 is a stunner with its gorgeous blend of black and red plastics, black-coated engine cases, titanium S3 exhaust pipe,

titanium anodised rims, hubs, bars and levers and a black powder-coated swinging arm. As beautiful as the '09 model was, this new one blows it into the water. It's technologically advanced too although most of the improvements are internal and will only be noticed when riding or servicing the puppy.

So, anyway, two hours later and I've now got this brand-new trials bike sat in the DBR workshop and it looks so good it's almost a shame to get it dirty which is when I come up with the masterplan of creating the DBR/T+MX/Morecambe Visitor indoor trials course – genius! My thinking is that by riding the Gasser purely indoors it should never get dirty or scratched up by nasty rocks and stuff meaning that Shirty might not want to kill me when I drop it back off at Gas Gas HQ later in the year – fingers crossed!

The course is a relatively simple layout and starts in the canteen which is vital because the wall clock in here is one of the few in the building that still works. It also has some loading bay doors that when opened present a nice metre high drop into the back car park.

So when the second hand points north it's a case of dropping the clutch and hauling ass off the metre high step, slamming on the Gasser's awesome brakes to narrowly avoid the galvanised steel fence to the rear of the property, then making a 180 degree turn and speeding up the side alley that leads to the rear entrance to our building.

Obviously the door needs to be propped open previous to starting – as do all the doors on this intense course – or else you lose all kinds of time and a dab or two getting your alarm fob out of your pocket. Once through the doorway there's a flight of concrete steps to climb – 13 in total with a 90 degree left-hand turn leading to another three. On a good day it's a cleanable section but sometimes a dab is necessary to get around the bend safely.

A short corridor leads to another 90 degree left-hander – this time through a door frame. This next section despite being very easy – flat carpet – is actually the most hazardous of all. The old T+MX editorial department smells of death and sour milk – it's also reportedly one of the most haunted areas of the whole building. After this short flat-out in third gear blast it's time to hit the brakes, pass through another open doorway then drop back down some stairs to the lower level.

After everyone's left work there's not much of interest down there so it's back on the gas, following the course to the front of the building and the trickiest section on the whole course. Three steps to a very tight 180 degree right-hander open up to a 13-step staircase. This is where the new Michelin XLIGHT tubeless rear tyre really comes into its own as it grips like glue by folding around the edges of the stairs to provide flawless traction.

I've personally never made it up this section for

anything less than a three and on the odd occasion I've lost all forward momentum and slid straight back down the steps to the plastered wall. All I'll say at this point is thank gawd for bricks and mortar because if it was anything less I'd have a whole heap of explaining as to why there's a Sutty-sized hole through to the street outside.

When I finally make it to the top of the stairs there's a small hallway that leads me through the top corner of the DBR office, through the design studio, into and through the office of the ever efficient MD's PA then straight into the big guy's office. A strategically placed chair makes a great kicker to ride up and onto the oval desk that dominates the office before a quick hop off the other end marks the end of that hazard. Depending on how much effort I've spent getting up the killer stairs I may stop at this point to make myself a glass of orange cordial and eat a Kit Kat snack. Mmmmmm tasty.

After blasting out of the MD's office and into the hallway it's onto a section I like to call the Scottish Six Days hazard. It's basically just a simple ride through a disused office once inhabited by a former MD who came from north of the border and seemingly hung around for a little over one working week before departing – hence the name of that particular obstacle. The SSD has a tricky little turn/step combo before spitting bike and rider out into another fast blast across two offices before a downward spiral of steps leads down to the ground floor.

Once down the 13-step staircase there's a 180 degree left followed quickly by a 90 degree right into the current T+MX editorial office. It stinks in here too so I find it's best to hold my breath before dropping down a step or two into the Visitor editorial office which due to staff cutbacks and stuff is a vast expanse that offers no real hazards in the way of desks or workstations.

Out of that office and it's a short blast down a corridor through a doorway to the right and across the finish line. A look up to the clock to record the time and a quick tally up of marks lost through dabs gives an overall score – sweet! My quickest lap so far is one minute 19 – so that's what I class as standard time for the time being – with eight marks dropped. In bona fide Kickstart stylee for every dab I drop I add five seconds to the overall time which makes my current best 1:59.

Can it be beat? I think it can and with plenty more practice I reckon I can drop it by around 20 seconds or so. Of course I can't play indoors forever – somebody's bound to notice the tyre tracks and ever present smell of pre-mix that constantly lingers in the air sooner or later – and seeing as though there's some good local trials coming up real soon I reckon it's time to get out there and get a little dirty.

Until then you can log onto YouTube for some awesome helmet cam footage of my indoor play sessions including a trip over the bars or two!

STROKER GENIUS!

LIGHTER, CHEAPER, MORE FUN – IS IT ANY WONDER THAT FOR MANY RIDERS A TWO-STROKE REMAINS THE WEAPON OF CHOICE? WE TOOK THREE 125s TO ESSEX MX AND PRE-MIXED THINGS UP A BIT IN ATTEMPT TO FIND OUT WHAT IT TAKES TO BUILD A SORTED STROKER...

Words by Paul Harris Photos by Suttty

When the four-stroke revolution began to sweep through the 125 class in 2002 following the release of the YZ250F it seemed just a matter of time before the humble two-stroke disappeared from the scene entirely. Lightweight but lacking breadth of power and traction compared to the four-bangers, two-strokes went missing from frontline GP action with astonishing speed.

Just a few years later in the UK 125s were largely relegated to a handful of clubman stalwarts. But there grew an increasing feeling that the ditching of 125s was not a wise decision – the motors might not be as user-friendly to ride but they were definitely easier on the pocket and the bikes were physically easier to lug around which made them ideal learning tools for young hotshots.

Chris Barker was the man who had the foresight to set up a 125 championship, a series that blossomed and grew into the Fuchs-Silkolene British two-stroke championship that's run by the MCF to this very day. Recognising that there was a large body of racers out there that still wanted to race then other governing bodies followed suit. The AMCA launched a two-stroke championship in 2007 and there are two new series scheduled for 2010 – one running alongside Cumbria Twinshock's Vets National Championship as well as a rumoured ACU series to run at MMX meetings. Then there's the much-vaunted FIM 125 2T European Championship. So far from disappearing from the scene the little blighters are thriving.

With the announcement of the FIM two-stroke series the rumour mill has cranked into life suggesting that Suzuki are testing RM125s again

– now with an aluminium frame – and that Kawasaki might get Pro Circuit to build them something and even Honda might make a return. But although it's a very welcome development to hear the manufacturers could be scrambling back aboard the two-stroke wagon there are only a few marques who've had the nuts to stay committed to the concept through the dark times.

We took a trio of sorted examples from KTM, Yamaha and TM to Essex MX and put three different riders on them just for the fun of it. There's nothing unobtainium here, the plan was just to show you what the average stroker-loving clubman can get his hands on with a bit of nous.

The day threw up some interesting findings – especially how different an opinion riders can form of the same bike – but then motocross has always been a sport strong on individuality. And if the day proved one fact conclusively it was that there are plenty of options when it comes to getting your mitts on a competitive 125cc two-stroker.

The Yamaha has had the most money spent on it with a full Rinaldi kit alone costing something in the region of £1600 but the end result is a bike that handled better than anything else out there and also made competitive power. The KTM is maybe more indicative of the sensible approach a clubman rider with a budget should take – small engine and suspension mods that produce a well-rounded package on a par with the Yamaha but there's no magic to it, no work that a small independent tuner or suspension bloke couldn't do. And finally, most astonishingly of all, you can take a standard TM straight out of the crate, put some fuel in it and race it as it is. And if you're as good as Jim Davies you can even win the British 125cc two-stroke championship on it...

Our test trio of 125cc sorted strokers courtesy of KTM, TM and Yamaha





THE PILOTS

A knee injury's kept Dave Willet off his beloved 125cc two-stroke for part of the season



JIM DAVIES >>

The newly-crowned 2009 British 125cc champ, Jim represents TM for us. A regular in the 125 championship since its inception, Jim rode through broken ribs among other injuries to lift the crown for the first time this year. He's brought his title-winning TM125 along for the day.



RYAN HOUGHTON >>

The 14-year-old is the 2009 BYMX BW85cc champion. Ryan's rolled out a Chris Barker-tuned and spannered 125 for today, although it's not his race bike as he's been campaigning an 85 to great success all year long.



NICK BANKS >>

A top 12 Junior and regular A class qualifier in MCF's British championships, Nick's here to give us a good clubman's appreciation of the bikes. Nick's regular ride is a KTM SX125 but to round out the test we've managed to get our hands on a Yamaha for him. This YZ125 is the bike 2007 125cc champion Dave Willet campaigned before a knee injury brought a premature end to his season.



Nick rates the TM as "very quick"



Jim's bike is set up for holeshots

THE BIKES

RYAN HOUGHTON'S KTM SX125 >>

JIM: "The chassis is very small – my knees felt quite bent with the peg position – but it's very impressive. The suspension was nice and the engine just pulled and pulled. It felt strong – bottom, mid and top. The suspension isn't set up for me but considering it's actually pretty rough out there now I felt I was okay on it. It felt pretty settled into the corners and it turns all right. Everyone says KTMs struggle to turn but it's pretty flowy out there and I managed to sink into the berms and pull out okay."

NICK: "First thing I noticed straight away was that the suspension's too soft, the rear kept hitting me up in the back every time I was going into the corners so it was hard to get on the gas. The brakes are very good and the motor is lovely. It's hard to tell the difference between that and the TM because it really pulled from the bottom right through – I'd say it has the most bottom out of the three bikes."

RYAN: "I prefer my bike. Everything's perfect with it! The suspension's perfect and I think it's a really strong engine – the power's all the way through. The Yamaha felt strong but I didn't think the TM was as strong. It's getting really rough out there now but the suspension's fine – everyone else seems to be kicking around and I seem to be going quite straight! That Yam was nice though but I'd still take mine, followed by the Yam – although I don't think it's a clear winner, the Yam's quite close."

DAVE WILLET'S YAMAHA YZ125 >>

JIM: "I thought it was going to be stronger than it actually was. Suspension felt really nice, really settled – I noticed that as soon as I went out – but I thought it was going to be stronger than it was. It did pull though, nice and fresh from bottom to mid. And the clutch and throttle were nice and it did seem to sink into the corners pretty well but I wouldn't say it was any better or worse than anything else. But it felt pretty strong – I don't know whether it's as strong as Barker's KTM but then again the track is roughing up."

RYAN: "I think it handles really nice and I like the power where it is – the whole way through – and it corners nice as well. It seemed a little bit shorter as it turns in quicker. It feels perfect. Suspension's good over the bumps, brakes are good as well if not as sharp as the TM. It's a nice bike."

NICK: "It handled exactly how I thought it would handle – absolutely awesome – and the suspension is great. I'm not sure how Dave's got it set up but there's not much off the bottom, it's more of a revvy bike. You've got to keep on top of the power. But, yeah, it is a very nice bike to ride. I was having so much fun I didn't want to come in! Dave and I must be about the same sort of weight so this bike to me feels awesome. I got on here and I thought the bars were a bit upright but after a lap I wanted to go back and do this to mine as it allows you to turn more."

JIM DAVIES' TM125 >>

RYAN: "They look quite nice but for me it felt as though the power's only at the top of the revs. You come out of a corner and there's nothing there, you have to be straight on the flat-out power. It's quite easy to get used to but there's nothing low down. And the front brake is so sharp, really good brake. The suspension's not set up for my weight so I was bouncing around. I thought I'd hate it but I didn't mind it that much. It turns quite sharp – the bike feels a little bit shorter so it's easy to turn."

NICK: "The motor is very good – it's a strong 125 – and it pulled early on as well, not just at the top. And it really did pull – the motor's awesome. The suspension didn't feel good at all and I got spat around a few times. Maybe I'm a little bit lighter than Jim? He says it's stock and hasn't had it set up for himself or anything. Maybe it'd be different if it was set up for me but I didn't like the suspension to be fair as it spat me around quite a bit down the straights. The brakes are very good and the gearing is nicely spaced out and it does pick up. It's a very quick bike."

JIM: "It was nice just to go back onto my bike. At first it took me a lap or two just to get used to it because it's really rough out there now but it feels good. I've got a lot of bottom to mid although I haven't really got top end, it comes out the corners and it's good. But that's how we've set it, so I can get off the start. I'm used to that suspension – Dave's rear suspension felt really settled but the front wasn't right for me although obviously it's right for Dave."



Ryan reckons the TM turns quickly but feels there's a lack of low down power



Jim really rates the spread of power on the KTM...



...but expected the Yam to be stronger

MODIFICATIONS

RYAN HOUGHTON'S KTM SX125 >>

CHRIS BARKER: "Ryan's bike is his brother's '07. It's got SXS front forks and a rear shock modified for his weight, the right spring, the valving's been sorted as he's only light, we've modded the cylinder a little bit with a head insert and we've run an SXS125 CDI box. Today he's run a Doma pipe but basically we're constantly testing pipes – sometimes it's a DEP, sometimes HGS."

"We haven't been competing it this year because he's been on the 85 so whenever we go out we're just testing to get things ready for next year. But it's not a great deal of money – to the average guy if he had to go and buy everything that's on Ryan's bike you're probably looking at a budget of six or seven hundred quid. There's no case modifications, no reed block, no brakes mods, no chassis mods – basically you can go and get an old bike and do a few bits to it."

DAVE WILLET'S YAMAHA YZ125 >>

DAVE WILLET: "Buy a Rinaldi kit, go to ERS Suspension and get a DEP Torque pipe and a V Force. And that's it."

JIM DAVIES' TM125 >>

JIM DAVIES: "The bike's as stock as they come, pretty much everything's stock on it."

GOING DOWNHILL... FAST!

JAKE AND JOSH TEAM UP WITH MTB PROS RICH THOMAS AND BRENDAN FAIRCLOUGH FOR A DAY OF RIPPIN' IT UP DOWNHILL...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Sutt

Okay, here's the plan. Get a couple of top motocross riders, take them to the top of a steep hill, strap them to a couple of downhill mountainbike rigs and cut them loose to do battle against the clock and each other. Throw in a couple of top UK downhill pro riders to mentor and team up with the MX pros and ISO2 to fuel the athletes for the day and we've got a recipe for a full-on day's action...

So who could we get to ride? Which riders would be brave enough to leave their comfort zone for a new challenge? Well it didn't take too long to find a pair of 'up for it' individuals who seemed to relish the thought of a day's downhill fun and carnage.

First off, enter Josh Coppins who was bringing to the table a wealth of experience at the pinnacle of our sport and absolutely zero experience of downhill mountainbiking! Go on JC! Then we had Jake Nicholls representing youthful exuberance and boasting a few days downhill riding experience with the legend of loon that is Scotty Columb on his post-season fun trip to New Zealand.

The downhill pro riders for the day's action were a pleasure to organise. "Guys, are you up for riding with two of the fastest MX riders on the planet?" "Yes!" came the reply. Okay, that's that sorted.

Richard Thomas is a rising star in UK downhill and managed to rip out a solid second place finish in the '09 national series in his first year as a Pro Elite rider on his Anchiolotti UK-sponsored race bike. This young man rips and trains hard for his sport between studying sports science at Bath University.

Our other pro for the day's one of the very quickest gravity guys on earth. Brendan Fairclough is fast – and I mean very fast – on his full-factory Specialized race bike. The 21-year-old from Guildford is team-mate to the current World Cup series champion Sam Hill and is chasing world domination himself after finishing eighth in 2009.

The riders were sorted and a few phonecalls later a couple of fully-prepped downhill bikes were arranged. You have to appreciate that these downhill bikes come in at between three and five thousand pounds to buy so we really appreciate KTM cycles dealer Pat Belcher from Bike Station UK lending us his KTM Aphex rig for Jake and Chris at Mojo for the loan of the Orange Patriot for Josh (I wouldn't lend them lunatics my beautiful Lapierre DH 920!).

'Team Rich T' was Richard and Jake as Jake

was sporting some experience of downhill and 'Team Brendog' would obviously be Brendan and Josh who allegedly had no experience. I say 'allegedly' as Mr Coppins is a bit of a sly one when it comes to these challenges as demonstrated five years ago when I set up a surf comp for the MX guys down at Surfing Life HQ and Josh smoked the competition with a seasoned display of long boarding while everyone else nearly drowned!

The format for the day was as follows. Track walking with the mentors to look at lines etc followed by a couple of hours training to learn the bikes and tracks. Then there was some photoshoot stuff with the Sutt and finally the race off. There would be two timed runs on both tracks for each rider with the fastest two times from each team rider added together to give the victorious team bragging rights.

Track one used a shorter, steeper top section with technical turns on the loamy and rooty ground before dropping hard onto the fire road and into the bottom section which was the same for both tracks. The top section on track two was going to be hard work for both teams as it was a lot longer with a 100m pedal section along the fire road in the middle of the run to join the bottom section. The bottom half of the track incorporated fast turns and one killer switchback turn which, within site of the finish, required a hard pedal out to drop in to hit the two 25ft doubles just before the finish.

The crew kitted up and Pat whipped some bacon rolls together for everyone in the Bike Station team vehicle as the banter began. The competitive vibe between the MTB boys was out in the open as off to the hill they went, checking lines on the push up the course. Josh and Jake were keeping things quiet as they entered into a slightly different world but the excitement was easy to see in them as they looked forward to the first runs down the hill.

A lot of chat and tension was focused on the two sets of doubles at the bottom of the track as jumping a mountainbike requires a slightly different technique to jumping a dirt bike. Jake had the downhill body position dialled straight away so my tension levels eased up when I saw him follow Rich down the track, easing into it with no heroics and checking his line into the doubles as surely no-one in their right mind would hit them first time out?

What I witnessed next sums up the mindset of JC! Following Brendan on his first run and looking, shall we say, slightly sketchy, Josh was' >>

*The Reverend Jake Nicholls
enjoys some gravity depravity*

Richard Thomas is ranked second
in the UK Pro Elite standings



Josh quickly turns his hand to
downhill - anyone would
think he'd done it before!



T1 – TIMES

RICH	BRENDAN	JAKE	JOSH
Run 1 – 38.9	Run 1 – 37.1	Run 1 – 44.0	Run 1 – 42.7
Run 2 – 38.8	Run 2 – 36.9	Run 2 – 43.0	Run 2 – 46.0

T2 – TIMES

RICH	BRENDAN	JAKE	JOSH
Run 1 – 57.8	Run 1 – 57.6	Run 1 – 64.2	Run 1 – 63.9
Run 2 – crash	Run 2 – 56.8	Run 2 – 63.0	Run 2 – 67.0

giving it 100 per cent effort. Brendan pulled over on the track to speak to Josh about the two doubles and Josh just ripped on by and hit both sets in a frightening display of bravery! He nearly flew over the bars on the first double but kept the hammer down into the next, bigger set and nearly flew over the bars again! Absolutely superb! The best thing about it was the reaction from Josh as he thought it was totally under control. Scary, scary man!

The pressure was on and Jake soon had the doubles dialled while Josh was looking more comfortable with each run down the hill and both riders were clearly benefiting from some tips from Brendan and Rich. So with both tracks dialled in we broke for lunch before the competitive part of the day began.

With the timing system set up and working and Pat at the finish to record the times it was

time to get it on. Rich and Brendan were going to get both timed runs done on track one before handing the timing watches over to Jake and Josh. The tension was building and the race faces were definitely developing – there was absolutely no doubt that everyone was going to give this 100 per cent effort for their teams.

Rich was off first and rippin', staying smooth and putting in a solid run. Brendan found his groove on the top half of the course with some unbelievable speed over the short and aggressive run. Both pros laid down two solid and super-fast runs with Brendan smashing it with a fastest time of 36.9 to Rich's 38.8 – Team Brendog were off to an early lead with a 1.9 second advantage after the first runs. The banter, of course, started again straight away!

It was time for Jake and Josh to rip it up. These two couldn't have more different styles on

downhill bikes with Jake looking smooth and low on both timed runs and Josh running with some strange lines and unleashing his leg and upper body power through the bike at every opportunity. It really was incredible to see how quickly both riders had taken to the challenges of the day and were prepared to lay it down with maximum effort. Contrasting styles from the MX men and the times were super-close when the dust settled after the two runs with Josh just having the upper hand by 0.3 seconds! Maximum effort all round on track one but the energy-sapping track two was looming large.

Team Brendog were looking strong at the halfway point with a lead of 2.2 seconds but Team Rich T were gaining in confidence as Jake was getting stronger by the run and Rich was looking to run Bren down over the mid-course flat-out sprint. Josh was running high



Brendan Fairclough shares a team with the current World Cup series champion

For a bunch more images from our photoshoot go to www.dirtbikerider.com



on confidence as he was dialling things in on the Orange and looking (slightly) less scary with each run and Brendan was starting to hang at the back while pushing back up the track to check lines. It was getting serious!

The pros went off first and to say they were giving it everything is an understatement. Both Bren and Rich pedalled so hard along the fireroad I feared for their crank arms and pedals! They absolutely tore it up and ended up just two tenths apart with Brendan again getting the upper hand. The lead was up to 2.4 seconds now so Jake had to get the hammer down and try to take time out of Josh...

Both guys again gave it absolutely everything on their first runs down the course and Josh again used his power to take a slender lead and increase Team Brendog's advantage by a further 0.3 of a second to a total of 2.5 seconds with

just a single run left for each rider. Team Rich T were on the ropes and it was starting to rain!

Rich hit his final run with purpose and was flying – then 'wallop', he was head first into a sandbank and it was over for his run as Brendan ripped an even quicker time to take the lead up to 3.5 seconds with Josh and Jake at the top of the hill ready for their final runs. Jake was going to have to take a massive amount of time out of Josh to snatch the win for Team Rich T.

The Reverend gave it every drop and took over a second off his first run time but it wasn't going to be enough. Josh took to the hill and put in a smooth(ish) run, pulling a fat whip on the big double before the finish as he knew Team Brendog had it in the bag. Good times!

The final time difference was brilliantly close with Team Brendog taking victory by 2.6 seconds over Team Rich T.

CHEERS!

THANKS TO...

Thank you to all involved in making the day a success – Sutt Dawg, Marge the Gunz, Brendan Fairclough, Richard Thomas, Jake Nicholls, Josh Coppins, Pat and the crew @ www.bikestationuk.com, ISO2 Sports Nutrition, Chris and the Mojo Massive and Rich Simo.

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RAGE



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STARTURNS! DOUBLEACT! 2010NEWS
2009'S MAIN MOVERS AND SHAKERS HAWKINS AND SHIPTON UNCUT DATES, VENUES AND TEAM CHANGES

JOSHWATERMAN



Josh Waterman
and girlfriend Katie



Ryan Houghton's
looked cool and composed



STARTURNS!

RAGE REVIEWS THE MAIN MOVERS AND SHAKERS OVER THE 2009 SEASON

The 2009 season produced a set of national youth champions that were in the main fully predicted last spring with one notable exception – the sensational blond bomber himself Nathan Watson. Here's my rundown of the stand-out stars...

CONRAD MEWSE

Starting with the 65s and working up through the ranks there is only one logical name to begin with – Conrad Mewse. After watching just a few of his 2008 performances as a speedy, brave, spirited little eight-year-old in youth nationals, Rage was fully impressed enough to predict last October that Conrad would possibly lift two national titles in '09.

In the event two wasn't quite enough as Conrad trumped everyone, hoovering up all three national crowns – BYMX, EYC and BSMA – and in spectacular style too. In all reality once the first somewhat nervy national victory at BSMA Wildtracks was safely under his belt Conrad was virtually untouchable. Sid Evans, Henry Williams and Jake Deacon gave Conrad a fair rattle here and there along the way nicking the odd moto win but generally if we are talking 65s in '09 it was all about the little Somerset smasher.

Conrad's BYMX crown was the hardest fought and he ended up winning that by the proverbial mile claiming 29 of the 34 motos contested – emphatic and conclusive to say the very least!

BEN WATSON

In his 2007 Junior 65cc season Ben swept all before him and two years on he did it again. This time in the SW division, Ben won both BYMX and EYC titles at a relative canter, finishing the season with an amazing win record that eclipsed even Conrad's. In the BYMX Ben returned an incredible 30 wins from the 34 races run.

Again looking back to the Rage predictions pre-season I stated Ben might well go all year unbeaten. And if he had done so no-one would have been that surprised given the quality of his stunning performances on the super-quick PAR Honda. At the end of the day Ben was pure dynamite cover-to-cover, winning two championships that he made look very easy but the reality was a class full to the brim with top talent. Although generally speaking some distance behind Ben at the final flag!

RYAN HOUGHTON AND NATHAN WATSON

In the BW class there were two riders battling for the main honours all year long. Nathan Watson won the EYC title but Ryan Houghton won the BYMX crown in the only competition where they actually crossed swords.

In the early part of the BYMX year Ryan took on the mantle of being the ultimate racer with no-one managing to put a fair and square pass on him until round four at Dean Moor. Nathan made the pass and he it was who duly took charge from there on until the final flag at Foxhill.

If Nathan hadn't suffered a nightmare at Little Silver he would surely have carded a fantastic championship double. As it was Ryan hung on to his season-long lead brilliantly to win the title despite Nathan's Raging Bull performances. That kind of composure from a guy a full year younger than Nathan can't be underestimated or undervalued.

There is no doubt the pressure of leading the championship took the edge off Ryan's natural instinct to just go out there and kick ass. Judging the duo solely on the end-of-season form and results Nathan would win hands down as he and the Pro Circuit/PAR Honda were just that damn awesomely quick. Without doubt Nathan finished the season as the star, the rider who had improved the most and put himself right in the shop window as one of the favourites for 2010 Open class honours. But to compare them both head-to-head – at different ages, on totally different machines and at different points in their MX careers – isn't a fair option right now.

JOSH WATERMAN AND LUKE HAWKINS

In the Open class just as in the BWs there are two real 24 carat names to juggle – that of Josh Waterman and Luke Hawkins.

You have to say once James Hutchinson and Josh Spinks crashed out of the youth national season early on and with Scott James retiring the task of winning any of the various Open class youth championships became

DOUBLEACT!

HAWKINS AND SHIPTON UNCUT...

By Jeff Perrett

No matter what motocross club you belong to or what meeting you're at there will always be some jokers. One such rider who always seems to be walking around between motos having a good time is Luke Hawkins.

This year he's had every right too as he came on strong in the latter part of the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup to convincingly take the title with a round to go. We caught up with him and his sidekick Jake Shipton for a bit of banter as the comic geniuses gooned around between races at Culham and – as always – they were very much tongue-in-cheek.

RAGE: So Pinky and Perky – aka Shippo and that other one that got lucky – what's going down right now? Looks like you're misbehaving...

LH: "Nah, not us, we're good boys – we don't ride in the pits or anything. We're just checking out some lines and checking out the girls."

RAGE: Ah right, glad to see you're taking the most important things in life seriously! Okay Professor Hawkins, tell me about your championship year. Word on the street is that you got lucky...

LH: "Yeah, totally! All I did was do a few scrubs and made up a bit of time, did a few whips that got a few points and that was about it really! Nah, it's been really good, especially the second half of the season. I lost points at the start and then I was trying hard to catch up and it wasn't really clicking, then at round three it did and I won every overall except Cusses Gorse where he [Jake] beat me."

RAGE: Jake – that must've been good putting one over on your comedy partner?

JS: "Yeah, it was, I hammered him that day..."

LH: "No you didn't! You beat me by three points!"

JS: "Whatever! I was on fire and too much for you to handle! Yeah it was good, it was my best meeting of the year but I just couldn't seem to do it all the time and then I got a couple of small

injuries and lost a bit of confidence. Luke rode really well towards the end and nobody could really get near him. It's annoying to say that with him stood next to me but he deserves it!"

LH: "Ah, thanks mate!"

RAGE: All right, all right, if you're going to get like that you two should get a room! Luke, you looked like you were having a lot of fun when you got onto that 250 two-stroke, it seemed to give you more confidence and you took it up a level."

LH: "Yeah, it was so much fun to ride and I think it made me a better rider and even more aggressive – like into the face of jumps and railing berms, I love it. I can throw it around more and seems lighter. You really have to ride it hard and I like that."

JS: "He says that to all the girls!"

RAGE: What does winning the Red Bull Elite Cup Rookie title mean to you? I bet you're now 'gert lush' with all the girls in Bristol?

LH: "I'm gert lush with them anyway [laughs]!"

JS: "Oh my god, no you're so not. You talk so much smack – rubbish. All the girls think you're a gimp!"

LH: "Yeah, whatever, I've got it going on. Anyway, it's pretty cool to win any championship but I'm really happy to win this one because it's just so cool. It sounds cool doesn't it? The races have been a lot of fun, there's always something going on and tracks have been really good – it's just got better and better."

RAGE: Well, best let you two scout for girls because I know you're not looking for lines – see you later Pinky and Perky.

JS: "Which one is which?"

RAGE: Work it out for yourselves, you decide!

LH TO JS: "I think he reckons you're Pinky..."

JS: "Why?"

LH: "Because you're that colour and I'm always Perky..."



...and so does big bro Nathan!



Conrad Mewse has been almost unbeatable in '09

easier than it might have been.

In the final reckoning Luke Hawkins finished in fourth place in the BYMX standings and won the mixed-capacity EYC Rookie title. Luke also finished as the runner up in the ACU MXY2 class. On both occasions in ACU competition Josh Waterman was the undisputed king, winning the BYMX and MXY2 championships by a clear margin. But the reality could have been so different if only Luke hadn't missed out almost completely at round one of the BYMX at Mildenhall through injury and suffered a couple of mad moments in the heat of summer at Hawkstone Park in his MXY2 campaign.

There are other aspects you could consider with Luke being the younger by quite a distance. As for machinery? Well, Josh to his credit ran an almost stock Danger UK KTM while the PAR Honda of Hawkins looked and sounded as if it belonged under an awning in a Maxxis pit. By the end of the season both guys have improved their stock and standing to such an extent they will be ones to watch out for as they shake up the establishment in the pro ranks next year.

So there we have it, six top-drawer performers all with a glorious season behind them. Well done gents!

TOOTALL!

HAVING OUTGROWN HIS BW85cc STEED, OLIVER TOWNSEND'S THE LATEST RIDER TO MOVE UP TO A 250F

The problem of the tall teenager who constantly seems to be bashing his knees on the bars as he gets far too big for a BW machine seems to be something of a growing situation season-on-season.

"Tell me about it," says Oliver Townsend who, at just 14 years old, has had to make the tricky decision to switch to a 250F for the 2010 season. Oliver could have potentially spent another two years on an 85cc machine battling it out in the green plate division but the thought of another season of bruised knees was just too much to contemplate.

At first the move to a bigger bike seemed to be a little bit daunting but once aboard a new Honda 250F Oliver instantly looked and felt right at home. Already this autumn Oliver has shown a nifty turn of speed aboard the new iron and posted a few really good club results including a second place overall finish behind David Sweet recently.

The early part of Oliver's career was plagued with a whole catalogue of serious and disruptive



© Michael Bennett

injuries but following last season's injury-free run Oliver is now really looking forward to more improvement during 2010.

For next season Oliver will be majoring on the Elite Rookies class with other entries pencilled in for some BYMX events and races in Holland too.

Despite all the setbacks of recent years and a fresh knee injury picked up while training at Mepal very recently Oliver is still fully committed to the cause.

He trains hard in the gym three times a week with every weekend spent on the bike either practising or racing both in the UK and Holland. All the very best for 2010 Oliver...



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2010NEWS

DATES AND TEAM SWITCHES

All of the main youth series – BYMX, BSMA, EYC/MCF and KWS Masters – have been really quick off the mark in announcing their respective dates and venues for 2010.

Unfortunately there's a mega date Clash of the Titans between the BYMX championship and the EYC/MCF Red Bull Pro National series with the BYMX running at Foxhill the same weekend – July 10/11 – that the MCF touches down at Wakes Colne.

The BYMX Express Insurance-sponsored series have added Mepal and Norley to their list of seven quality championship venues while the MCF extend their EYC championship to a full eight rounds at some of the country's top tracks. As for the BSMA, well, they are celebrating 40

years in youth motocross sport with a £25 yearly licence fee.

So what else is new for 2010? On the rider and machinery fronts colours, horses and cubes are being exchanged, tried, tested and traded with a few guys already looking good to go in winter action.

Ben Watson is back on the KTM and looking right on the money. Liam Knight has parked his KTM and thrown a leg over a Honda four-banger with Jordan Godwin also giving the CRF a good examination in winter testing. David Keet and Sunny Thompson have already signed on different coloured lines too with David now being a fully fledged member of Team Green while Sunny has opted for the blue line of Samsung Yamaha.

Ben Watson's looking right on the money on a KTM



David Keet joins Team Green



Liam Knight's got his mitts on a Honda four-banger

2010DATES

RED BULL ELITE YOUTH CUP

R1	Foxhill	March 13/14
R2	Canada Heights	April 3/4
R3	Landrake	May 15/16
R4	Whitby	June 26/27
R5	Wakes Colne	July 10/11
R6	Pontrilas	August 7/8
R7	Canada Heights	August 21/22
R8	Wakes Colne	September 18/19

KWS

R1	Mallory Park	March 13/14
R2	Dean Moor	April 10/11
R3	Whitby	May 8/9
R4	Foxhill	June 5/6
R5	Landrake	July 3/4
R6	Hawkstone	August 7/8
R7	Pontrilas	September 4/5

BSMA BEST OF BRITISH

R1	East Anglia	March 20/21
R2	Moredon	April 10/11
R3	Rhayader	May 8/9
R4	Cotswold	July 24/25
R5	Cornwall	August 28/29
R6	Coventry	October 2/3

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R1	Leuchars	March 27/28
R2	Norley	April 17/18
R3	Mepal	May 22/23
R4	Dean Moor	June 19/20
R5	Foxhill	July 10/11
R6	Brampton	July 31/August 1
R7	Cusces Gorse	September 11/12

GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

Then contact our Youth Editor Mike Gurney at mikegurney55@yahoo.co.uk

A U S S I E RULES!

BILLY'S FINALLY MADE IT TO OZ AND AFTER A FEW SKETCHY MOMENTS IS NOW RIGHT AT HOME AND POLISHING UP HIS SX SKILLS...

Words and photo by **Billy MacKenzie**

G'day Britain! I've not quite turned Aussie yet, although I have got their accent down pretty good already when I try – but I get the most laughs when I turn on the full Scottish lingo, especially when I do my 'Big Bill' impression. I've told everyone the story about my brother and the cap and they find it absolutely hilarious!

So the Oz lot have some good banter about them and I've fitted in nicely with the new team. It's actually not very full-on Aussie as most people have some kind of British background. It's kinda like a cross between America and the UK. They drive on the same side of the road as us and the money has the Queen's head on it but it's roasting hot with the eating habits of the US – big outback steak bars everywhere, onion rings, potato wedges, sour cream dip. You know how it goes! So I'm trying to avoid all those places.

The weather hasn't been below 30 degrees since I arrived and everywhere you drive you'll see tracks or minibike tracks by the side of the road. It's so open and easy going out here, everyone cruises down the motorway at the speed limit which on these huge roads with no cars seems really, really slow.

The first day I arrived was really scary. Me and Harriet turned up at the airport with only a bag to our names. We had no phone or numbers and were just hoping that someone had read my email with my flight times to pick us up! It took us ages to get through the airport – like it does – and then when we walked out the place was empty and it looked like no-one was waiting for us. We waited around for a while before I scraped enough money together to use the internet and get the number for John Titman Racing, then I had to use the pay phone with all the weird dialling codes and short numbers.

Luckily, John was waiting for me outside (John is the father of Kevin who helped me set everything up over here) but he's an old dude and gets a bit grumpy when his day is disrupted, kinda like Big Bill is getting with his old age (love you really dad)! So he picked us up and we exchanged the usual pleasantries on the way to his workshop, however, I don't think Kevin had explained to his old man that he'd arranged to sort me out a vehicle for the time being until I got organised over here.

So when I mentioned it to John I kinda

put him on the spot and being the nice guy he is he loaned me his van for a week. I still felt like a lost little pup as Kev was in Italy at the bike show and Troy, my new team manager, was down in Sydney seeing some friends with his wife so it was only Harriet and me. With the open road in front of us and nowhere to stay for a few days plus no phone and no contact numbers I decided to visit Byron Bay to pass some time. This was my fav place when I travelled last year but the thing was we weren't really in holiday mode anymore and we needed to get organised and set up camp.

The last week in Thailand there was a monsoon so all our clothes were dirty. We had been living in little sheds for almost two weeks and we both had it in our heads that when we hit Oz we'd get sorted and start living normally again! So we managed to pass the day in Byron, sat on the beach reminiscing about Thailand and the last time I was in Byron.

I managed to remember some phone numbers and got a pay-as-you-go phone, then got hold of Troy and arranged to meet him at his place. So off we set again – we had to drive four hours north to Troy's and on the way I got a bit pedal happy in Old John's van. The roads are so big and clear out here that it's difficult not to get carried away! Windows down, arm out, sunglasses on – it's fantastic! The limit on the motorways is 100kmph and I managed to pass an undercover police car at 145! Needless to say I was pulled over – I looked in my mirror and seen a big copper fold himself out his police car.

I remained calm and waited for him to approach the window. He was pretty cool and when I explained I'd only just arrived he had a flash at my passport and realised I wasn't trying to get out of it. He turned his head, looked me in the eye and asked me a very simple question. "Do you like rugby?" Now, I can't really say I follow rugby but I know the Aussies love it so as my brain was clicking and my voices started talking, I realised this question had only one right answer. My angel piped up first being the honest of the pair with "well no, not really, don't follow it much mate," but just as I was about to deliver that exact sentence my devil dived in with an uppercut and blurted out "yes!" so I got away with it! Ha ha ha...

I cruised back after that, just taking it easy, looking for kangaroos and stuff but

then just as I pulled into the town where Troy lives I got done by another undercover cop with a camera in his car. I didn't even know or realise until Old John sent me through an envelope with a big fat fine in it! Needless to say I don't think I'm his favourite person right now! John, if you're reading this, I'm sorry!

After I got over the first few hurdles of landing in a new country things started to go real smoothly. We stayed with Troy for a week and he pretty much sorted my whole life out for me. I had planned on living on the coast but where Troy stays is so much better for riding and training – there are tracks everywhere you look and the beach is only an hour-and-a-half from where I'm living now.

Troy has lived here all his life so knows everyone and everything and has helped me out so much with setting up. I've been out riding supercross already and started training within the first week and got myself a cool little pad that's close to town and everything I need. There's loads of people to ride with and everyone is really cool. I've got the hang of supercross to a certain extent already – I managed to do all the rhythm sections and triples on the second day, then last week we spent a whole day practising going over the whoops. It's actually a lot easier than I thought (touch wood), there's no bumps, the laps are short and it's good fun! I can see why the US riders just do supercross-only contracts now. The good thing about Oz is that their supercross series is pretty new and everyone is learning at the same time so it's a perfect time to learn and the tracks are really nice. I went to watch a round in Sydney and the track looked awesome – I can't wait to race a real supercross!

So now I'm all set up and got all the things I need to ride and train for the winter (Aussie summer) so instead of cycling in the hail, rain and wind round the busy British roads I'll be clocking up the miles in the beautiful Australian sunshine.

When I first arrived I had doubts about whether I shoulda left but right now I'm confident I have made the right decision. The tracks are good, the weather is beautiful, the people are cool and I have the opportunity to learn and ride SX or even just my bike any day I want!

BD 12/11



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